

FAMILY PICTURES,
A
NOVEL.

CONTAINING

Curious and Interesting MEMOIRS
of several Persons of Fashion in
W——re.

Still in the paths of honour persevere,
And not from past or present ills despair ;
For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.
CONGREVE.

By a L A D Y.

In TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N :

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THE EDITOR'S
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
B O O K S E L L E R.

S I R,

THE Sheets I now put
into your hands, notwithstanding the singularity of their
contents, I am not without
hopes, may meet with the fa-
vour of the Public.

The tale is literally true ;
the moral and sentiments are

very opposite to the generality of productions of this nature. I was induced to publish it from a tender regard to the female part of this Metropolis, whose more immediate province, I apprehend Novel-reading to be.

I myself have children, and unfeignedly lament the danger their morals are exposed to, from the trash and obscenity the Press is daily pouring forth for their amusement, as it is called.

There is a perverseness in human nature, (derived, I suppose, from our original parents,) of eagerly desiring whatever is prohibited. If, therefore, a sensible and tender relation,

lation, guardian, or friend, should unwarily enjoin their young favourites to avoid contaminating their minds by an injudicious choice of common place authors, such a proceeding would be only casting a stumbling-block in their way, or in other words, betraying them into that very evil, they so anxiously wished them to shun. On the other hand, should the inexperienced be permitted to pursue their giddy inclinations, unwarned of the fatal consequences, they might then too justly complain against their protectors, for not saving their morals from corruption, by well-timed caution, and proper admonition.

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It has been, indeed, the custom of the world in general, and consequently of England, to be negligent and backward in training up female minds to literature, the distaff or domestick concerns being allotted them as their proper and most natural province; and undoubtedly a domestick character, by being the most suitable, is the most amiable they can appear in. But I cannot forbear observing, that, for many generations past, due methods have not been taken to cultivate and improve this valuable innate talent. Where to fix the origin of this evil, I am at a loss to determine; but it is
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evident, that the generality of mothers instruct their daughters, or cause them to be instructed, merely in such particulars, as are not only useless to society, but likewise highly pernicious. Should Miss have the misfortune to be handsome, she is early taught to hold her person in the greatest estimation. Does she possess the talent of mimicry or ridicule, how is she encouraged to exercise it upon her nearest relations, or worthiest friends, though a talent that never fails to create disgust and contempt! She must not learn to write, for fear of becoming round-shouldered, or work, lest she impair her
fine

fine eyes. Therefore a little imperfect French, an easy (and too frequently an insufferable) assurance, to tingle a harpsichord, and play quadrille, includes the whole of female education.

Whereas the rougher bred boys, by having acquired a superficial knowledge of History and the Classics, assume the privilege of laughing at their illiterate sisters, who instantly resolve to be upon an equality with the affected pedants. In consequence of this resolution, they get their Mamma's waiting-gentlewoman to enroll them members of some circulating-library, where they obtain an
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easy and inexhaustible supply of such authours, as it had been better for them, (for the bad effects of their works,) they had never been born.

Though this misfortune is irremediable on account of the extensiveness of it, yet is it not without possibility of extenuation. This performance has the single merit, (the Editor flatters herself,) that, at worst, it will prove inoffensive; a merit which the sensible and ingenuous will not deny it, whatever may be the opinions of some few over-nice cavillers.

As long as the world continues to be distinguished into the learned and unlearned,
male

male and female, young and old, performances in the Novel-way will never be unreasonable; for it is no less absurd to suppose pedants capable of dipping into so mean a work as a Novel, than ridiculous to imagine the larger part of Novel-readers capable of comprehending the Classics: consequently, unless our capacities and educations could be reduced to one common level, amusements of this inferior kind will be essential. The grand point, therefore, is to render them, if not improving, at least innocent.

The characters introduced to the readers acquaintance in
this

this little work, are not fictitious ones, nor the several remarkable incidents of their lives merely the product of a fertile brain. I would, therefore, recommend the serious consideration of them to the young and inexperienced.

Virtue is here its own reward, nor is it a deception or false colouring; for though success may not always be the attendant on well-doing and well-meriting, yet the peace and satisfaction that result from conscious virtue, are superior to every other support or dependence: for however prosperous the villain may continue for a period, his prosperity is merely external.

nal. That worm, which never dies, preys perpetually upon his heart, nor can he either bribe or compel it to spare him, though but for a moment : whereas the meanest condition may be rendered truly great, by a perseverance in justice and integrity ; for whosoever possesses an honest soul, capable of disdain- ing, and industriously shunning the paths of vice, is *greatest, wisest, best.*





FAMILY PICTURES,

A

N O V E L.

NOT many miles from the city of Worcester lived a gentleman of ancient descent, his name Mr. *Anthony Bentley*, a man uncommonly agreeable in his person, but singular in his manners, disposition, and judgement; in a word, the very reverse of what is considered in these modern days, as the fine gentleman, and the man of honour. His singularities flowed from an elegance of taste, a justness of sentiment, and a conviction that

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a life, regulated by the principles of christianity, was alone the life worthy of a rational being, conscious of its own dignity, and conscious of its frailty.

He possessed a clear unincumbered patrimony of seven hundred pounds per annum, which he distributed with an unequalled generosity. To the widow he was a sure friend, to the orphan a protector, a redresser of injuries, a discountenancer of vice, a patronizer of modest merit, and a terrour to the oppressor.

The early part of his education was committed by his good father to the care of a neighbouring divine, who was an honour to the sacred function he professed, without either austerity of manners, or severity of judgement. This gentleman had another pupil, son to the justice of the quorum, (a man of much consequence, though not large fortune) between



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between whom and Mr. *Bentley* there subsisted a most tender friendship. They had been acquainted from their infancy, were much of an age, and really similar in their dispositions. These boys promised themselves infinite satisfaction from spending the chief part of their days, if not under the same roof, at least at a very small distance from each other, and frequently amused themselves in forming chimerical schemes of future joint happiness, which were most unexpectedly annihilated by the following accident.

Mr. *Taylor*, the father of *Anthony's* friend, secretly obtained an honourable appointment for his son, under the East-India company at Madras, and at eighteen years of age the youth was sent over there. This separation was mutually considered by these young friends as a terrible misfortune, and in order to

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soften in some measure the severity of it, they determined to transmit to each other, by every opportunity, a faithful account of even the most ordinary occurrence of their lives, by which means they flattered themselves they should in some degree baffle the perverseness of that destiny, which had placed them at such an unforeseen and mortifying distance. They indeed borrowed this notion of a narrative correspondence, from the venerable author of *Clarissa*, it happening to coincide with their particular inclinations. The day of parting was truly a day of affliction to their young hearts, and after having enjoyed each others conversation as long as was in their power, their last adieu was concluded with reiterated promises of faithfully performing this epistolary agreement, which was accordingly strictly observed by them for the
space

space of six years; but as nothing remarkable happened to either of them during that term, I shall pass over these juvenile days of theirs in silence, and bring the reader acquainted with Mr. *Parker*, the clergyman already mentioned, some particulars of whose family it will be necessary to relate, he having an immediate connection with the most interesting parts of this history.

Mr. *Parker*, at the time the young friends were under his tuition, was possessed of no other preferment than a vicarage of one hundred pounds a year; on which little income himself, a wife, and daughter subsisted, and enjoyed a felicity unknown to the man of large possessions. Content and sweet cheerfulness opened their door, nor was it ever shut against the miserable and distressed, or indigent; for, notwithstanding his beneficent heart

was restrained within the narrow limits above-mentioned, his advice, assistance and protection the wretched might ever command.

His wife was the only child of one Mr. *Jones*, an officer, and had been bred up with tenderness, delicacy, and prudence. Her mother forfeited a handsome fortune by not accepting a man proposed to her by her relations, and presuming to choose for herself, an action (as her husband was the survivor) which she never lived to repent of, her affection for him, and his unabated tenderness to the last hour of her life, diminishing, in her eyes, the value of every other consideration.

Mr. *Parker* was a visitor at Mr. *Jones's* some time before the daughter had the least notion of his entertaining any particular regard for her; but upon the father's being seized with a fever, the symptoms of

of which were very unfavourable, he declared himself, and, with Miss Jones's consent, communicated his desires of becoming a son to the dieing man. A smile of pleasure and approbation took possession of his ghastly countenance, which remained fixed there even after his departure; then extending his feeble hand, "Advance, said he, my friend, you have softened for me the terrors of death, and I no longer feel a reluctance at quitting this place of disappointment, sickness, and tribulation. My child unprotected and unprovided for, I trembled but lately to think of, as the utmost I have to leave her will not amount to three hundred pounds; but now I have the consolation of knowing, you will so generously and abundantly supply to her the character I have filled, I shall wait my dissolution with a resignation, I hope,

not altogether unworthy of the faith I profess. Remember, my *Louisa*, continued he, that there is nothing will avail you at the hour I am now experiencing, but the consciousness of a well-spent life; be grateful, affectionate, and tender to the friend providence has so seasonably given you, and let not your happy exemption from the evils and difficulties, you must otherwise have been exposed to, be ever forgotten by you."

Poor Mr. *Jones's* spirits were now quite exhausted, and he seemed inclined to take a little repose. But, his malady hourly increasing, his physician, the next afternoon, at his repeated solicitations, acknowledged it to be his opinion that he had but a few hours to live.

Mr. *Jones* thanked him for his ingenuousness, and besought him to acquaint Mr. *Parker*, that his end was

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was so near, and to desire him to bring his dear *Louisa* to receive his last blessing. This melancholy summons was instantly complied with, Miss *Jones* having only withdrawn, at her father's request, whilst he endeavoured to learn the true state of his case from his physician. At their approach, "I feel, said he, my dear children, I feel myself much changed in point of bodily strength, perhaps my senses also may not remain long unimpaired; thus then, (taking his daughter's hand, and, as well as his feeble state would permit, giving it to her lover) thus let me finish my mortal concerns: my tenderest blessings forever be poured upon you, and remember, O remember, it is my dying request, that you would well consider the instability of all sublunary enjoyments, and seek an interest there, where true felicity is

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only

only to be found." The afflicted daughter, unable to sustain the violent agitations, into which she was thrown by this affecting scene, and which concealment served only to heighten, sunk down on the floor, being supported only by the feeble hand of her father, the clammy moisture of which but too strongly indicated the near approach of that grim monarch, who, alike unawed by greatness, as unmoved by tears, forces all to submit to his uncontrolled power. In this state she was conveyed to another apartment, and as she had a succession of fits for some hours, her father breathed his last before she came again to herself. Mr. *Parker* watched over her with the most tender regard, and soothed her returning reason with arguments the most prudently calculated to heal her wounded peace.

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He took upon himself the direction and management of the last offices for his friend, for his *Louisa's* father; and when the funeral solemnity was over, and every thing settled and disposed of to the best advantage, it appeared that two hundred and fifty pounds were the utmost of Miss *Jones's* fortune. The disconsolate daughter retired for a little while to an aunt's, 'till time should wear off the edge of her grief; and Mr. *Parker* visited his vicarage, in order to prepare his habitation, in the best manner his circumstances would admit, for the reception of his intended bride. He secured the small fortune she was entitled to, as a resource for her in case of his decease, and appointed trustees to lay it out, with the annual augmentation of the interest it produced. More he would have done,

but fortune had not given him the power of doing more.

All things being settled, their marriage was solemnized as soon as decency would permit, and Mrs. *Parker* arrived safe with her husband at his peaceful vicarage. In due time they were blessed with a daughter, and in their lives it was abundantly exemplified, that happiness is not the gift of the golden deity alone, but dependent on a right way of thinking, and a proper regulation of our passions and appetites.

The happy pair had now a delightful task, to watch the dawn of infant reason, in order, as the poet expresses it,

—— To rear the tender thought,
And teach the young idea how to shoot.

To this truly parental employment they applied themselves with so much diligence and success, as to
behold

behold the object of their uninterrupted care and kindness, not only free from all practical vice, but, to appearance, exempt also from every evil propensity of human nature.

The little *Eliza*, their daughter, had a person, which, though it could not come under the denomination of beautiful, was perfectly agreeable. In her countenance was displayed a most charming sensibility, every feature glowing with visible emanations of an intelligent and capacious mind. Her eye spoke softness and love, but modesty sat enthroned on her brow, while meekness, gentleness, and simplicity of manners were her amiable characteristics.

Besides the advantages of education before observed, she had in her father and mother the daily and striking examples of conjugal affection, universal philanthropy,
and

and charity in all its loveliness and attendant graces. Thus their precepts were enforced and explained by their practice; nor was one virtue left obscure or unintelligible to the understanding of their young pupil.

This little family, on Mr. *Parker's* obtaining a handsome benefice, removed to a village in Hertfordshire, where they lived six years without receiving one visit from Mr. *Bentley*, of whose proceedings we will now take a view; but as the whole of this relation is founded upon facts, collected from persons more or less concerned in the affairs of this family, we shall not confine ourselves to forms or regularity, but render our accounts either historical or epistolary, as may best conduce to the reader's information.

Mr. *Bentley*, at the age of twenty-five, was unhappily deprived of his father by a fit of apoplexy,
(his

(his mother had been taken off some years before) which severe stroke was very heavily borne by him for some time; the parent, companion, and friend, being too much to resign without the complicated pangs of filial regret, self-love, and solitary existence. He had, indeed, a brother; but as their minds bore not the least affinity to each other, they were of course strangers to the highest satisfaction the human heart is capable of, reciprocal friendship, and social confidence.

The ruling passion of *Daniel* (such was the brother's name) was an unbounded avarice; his nature was groveling, suspicious, and revengeful. Master of a deep cunning, he directed himself by that, and endowed with no inconsiderable share of low ambition, made use of his craft, as the means to rise. Ten thousand pounds, his mother's

mother's fortune, he enjoyed as the allotted provision for younger children, in which he had no competitor.

Though an increase of fortune would have been highly grateful to him, yet he had not the courage to expose himself to the hazard of commerce, or any of the other usual methods of acquiring riches. He, therefore, prudently resolved to make the utmost of his brother's generosity, (which, in his heart, he deemed weakness) by living upon him, in many particulars, beyond what could be done with a good grace. This was his motive for treating his brother with a show of respect; and so far did the fraternal love of the latter extend, as to induce him to take up his residence in his house, fill a place at his table, and use his horses as his own. Nay, further, though his brother was no sportsman,

sportsman, he imposed a pack of hounds from the same narrow motive, as an additional tax upon his hospitality.

Mr. *Bentley's* home, however, was become so distasteful to him on the death of his father, that he resolved upon a little excursion; every object he beheld contributed to feed his melancholy, and from absence and time he found he must seek that relief, which Bentley-hall and solitude could never give.

Mr. *Parker* being the person upon earth he most esteemed, except his absent friend, he determined, at this period, to make him a visit. He acquainted his brother with his intention, who secretly rejoiced at it, as he should by these means be at liberty to entertain his brethren of the chase free from the expense attendant on tavern meetings, and enjoy

enjoy their boisterous mirth without the least check or interruption.

There had been a short interval in the correspondence already mentioned between the two young friends, occasioned by an illness of Mr. *Bentley*, and the death of his father. He renewed it, however, previous to his intended visit, on which occasion he expressed himself in the following manner.

Mr. BENTLEY to Mr. TAYLOR.

I Acknowledge, my dear friend, that appearances are strongly against me, yet, I flatter myself, you will acquit me of every imputation of neglect, or abated affection, when I inform you of the melancholy cause of my silence. Would to God it had been derived from any other source; yet I dare not murmur, though, at once, deprived of the best of fathers and friends,

friends; a fit of apoplexy, my dear *Frank*, brought this evil upon me, which I shall ever deplore. How infinitely has this great calamity aggravated my detestation of that fatal scheme of promised advantage which induced your otherwise good father to separate us at such a horrid distance, as to cut off all possibility of our meeting for many years. Shall I confess to you, that, destitute as I am of all family enjoyments, I have laboured under the strongest temptations imaginable since this unhappy event, to make you a visit in your remote corner of the world, and I really believe, I should have yielded to these romantic impulses, had my health not been in the precarious state it is, or my brother such a brother, as to be fit to be entrusted with the management of my affairs during so long an absence; but as all these impediments lay before me,

me, I have fixed upon a journey rather more practicable, and perhaps also more prudent. This is a visit to our venerable tutor, who, you may remember I informed you immediately after your departure, was presented to a living in Hertfordshire, of double the income of his peaceful vicarage. The presentation of the latter he obtained for a young man of but little interest, who offered to officiate for him as his curate; but such was his goodness of heart, that he could not permit another to experience the misery of contracted circumstances, whilst he himself it, as he called, abounded, an uncommon instance of clerical moderation.

You know, my father and mother had a singular esteem for these worthy people, which is one great inducement to my taking the journey, as I hope, I shall not only recover the.

the balm of peace, but have likewise the reiterated good instructions of that excellent man, whereby to regulate my future conduit. This is a critical period; I am now become (what many a young heart pants after,) master of my own actions. But alas! how incapable am I, to swim in the rapid current of life, either with safety or honour, deprived as I am of that guide, without whose well-timed assistance I did not dare to venture one step beyond my depth.

Yet so mistaken and inconsiderate are the generality of youth, that their utmost wish is to have it in their power to expose themselves, and they bless the hand that robs them of their support and protection, from the vain conceit they have, because they find they can chirp with some little facility, that flying is no difficult performance. Too frequently, however, even the first attempt deceives.

ceives them, and after many fruitless endeavours, to regain their former eminence, they at last become sensible, that a much longer time, and an infinitely larger share, of experience, could alone have prevented the errors into which they find themselves hurried by their self-sufficiency.

I am very serious, but you must indulge me; I think it is rather extraordinary that I am able to resume my pen, or write with any coherency so early after such a calamity, for my dear father's remains have been lodged in peace by the side of my ever honoured-mother only a fortnight this day, and here am I as forlorn and disconsolate, as our first parent before the creation of the mother of mankind.

Daniel, you are sensible, is not a companion for me, though I must do him the justice to acknowledge, he behaves himself much better than usual.

usual. Whether the unexpected blow, we have so recently sustained, has had a good effect upon his mind, or from what other motive, I am quite ignorant, but we really are upon very tolerable terms. Yet, notwithstanding all this, Bentley-hall is not the place for me at present; therefore the next packet you receive from me will be dated from Mr. *Parker's* at whose house I hope soon to arrive.

It is needless to repeat my good wishes for a continuance (nay, if it please heaven an increase of all your worldly felicity, or to offer any assurances of my unaltered and unalterable friendship; wherefore I shall only add one ghostly admonition, *remember me*, and for ever be happier than is at present your's

A. Bentley.

LETTER

LETTER II. *from the same*

I Am now, my dear *Frank* after three days gentle and pleasant travelling, safely arrived at our old friends, and meet with that welcome I had so much reason to expect.

The dwelling-house was presented to our tutor by his worthy patron, there being no habitation annexed to the living. The gardens are, it seems, by his particular taste and direction, so crowded with yews, hollies, and every species of evergreens, that they might with great propriety be mistaken for the good gentleman's nursery.

The village-clock struck four when I arrived at this happy mansion, which, to my great mortification, I perceived through the open windows to be deserted by its inhabitants. I, however, rung the bell, and a man in a genteel livery, and

and of very sober appearance, immediately presented himself. Upon enquiry I found the good folks were only withdrawn, agreeably to their afternoon's custom, into their own shady antique gardens, and the fellow having with much civility desired me to alight, after seeing me within doors ran to acquaint his master with my arrival.

The room, I was shown into, was a very neat parlour, or more properly, I believe, our tutor's study, as its principal furniture consisted of that very library, the books of which you and I, by a peculiar indulgence, have so frequently turned over.

Old *Tray*, our faithful companion in many a youthful frolick, either from an instinctive hospitality, or in conformity to the benevolent disposition of his master, (for it is impossible he should retain a knowledge of me after an absence of six long years,

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altered too as I am,) careſſed me, with many honeſt marks of pleaſure and tranſport. How did theſe familiar objects recall to my imagination thoſe days of innocence and peace, thoſe ſcenes innumerable, in which you, my valued friend, played a part. The little heroes officiouſly obtruded themſelves on my internal view. My heart was inconceivably ſoftened at the recollection; nor do I know, how far the memorial of them might have prevailed, had not the ſervant awakened me from this pleaſing reverſy, by begging to know my name. I told him, it was no matter; he needed only acquaint Mr. *Parker*, that a gentleman, who appeared to be juſt come off a journey, would be glad to ſpeak with him.

I wiſhed (and doubt not of my ſucceſs) to puzzle the Divine with conjectures, concerning who it could

could be, as he had not received any previous notice of my intention to visit him. A glass-door, in some measure, defeated my design, by discovering to him, to use his own friendly expressions, the man upon earth he most desired, and least expected to see.

After many unfeigned professions of pleasure had passed on both sides, Mr. *Parker* proposed surprising his wife and daughter by an abrupt introduction of his visitor, and upon my acquiescence therein we immediately repaired to a beautiful alcove, where *Eliza* and her mother were sitting at work.

You must remember, that *Eliza* promised to be a very lovely woman, and I assure you, these last six years of her life have rendered her so in a very great degree. She was neat and blooming as a bride, and were I easier in my mind than at present

I am, I would give you a very different description of her, and at least have compared her to some Sylvan Goddess. Mrs. *Parker* with apparent pleasure and surprise arose to bid me welcome, and the fair *Eliza* made me an obliging compliment.

Tea and coffee were soon after brought, and enquiries relative to their Worcestershire friends succeeded.

A filial tear involuntarily stole down the cheek of thy *Anthony*, when I replied, "My dismal dress, Sir, is a sufficient information, that you have lost one very sincere well-wisher." A silence ensued, as they all felt sufficiently the meaning of my expressions, and were not a little affected at it. Mr. *Parker*, as he afterwards acknowledged, wished much to be informed of the particulars of my dear father's death, but

but restrained his curiosity, from a tender regard for his pupil, and upon recovering himself, started a subject, as if by accident, which contributed not a little to alleviate the sorrow of his guest.

This was a dissertation on the supreme wisdom, and man's narrow-sightedness, in which he proved to a demonstration, that whatever appeared hard in our state of mortality, we should be hereafter convinced, was the happiest fate that could have befallen us.

He drew a striking and odious picture of the ingrate who durst presume to complain, when surrounded with a multiplicity of blessings, because, perhaps, one only was withheld; especially, if he was permitted the enjoyment of it, until his own reason must inform him, that his loss was productive of fulness of joy to the dear object of his affection

and regret. “ This, continued the good and sensible man, is a weakness, so interwoven with our nature, that it is the most difficult to be conquered of any, but if we duly weighed the selfish principle by which it is suggested, we should banish it as unworthy the human breast.”

I was sensible of the kind motive of these well-timed observations, and listened to them both with gratitude and attention. The virtuous man, however, dwelt not long upon these serious subjects, but as the evening was uncommonly fine, he proposed taking a walk till supper-time. As you know, I am somewhat of a Naturalist, I enjoyed a particular satisfaction from the contemplation of some objects that presented themselves to our view, which though to vulgar eyes they appear as nothing, yet are often the most beautiful of Nature’s productions.

In every rill a sweet instruction flowed.

Eliza

Eliza partook along with us of these rational and elegant pleasures, as her father (to use his own words) was so peculiar in his sentiments, as not to judge it improper for a female to share in the admiration of that great Being, of whose works, continued he, I have ever taught her to consider herself the second best.

“ She has learnt, added he, from my information, that she is a weaker and more dependant being than man, Providence for wise purposes having placed her in a more immediate state of subordination, but that she is not to conceive from thence that her only value consists in what the butterfly can boast in a much superior degree, as such erroneous ideas could only tend to frustrate the end of her creation, which is, undoubtedly, to render herself a rational companion for the human species in

general, and an useful member of society."

We concluded the day consistently with this family's particular notion of things; for having convinced themselves, that their own wisdom and foresight were insufficient to secure them from the dangers and calamities incident to mortality, and, consequently, that the protection of the great authour of their existence was absolutely essential to that important purpose, they fancied it incumbent upon them to return their grateful acknowledgements for the blessings they were permitted to enjoy, and the evils from which they were happily exempted, and to repeat their humble solicitations for a continuance thereof. After which unfashionable, though surely not unnecessary ceremony, we separated early on account of my late fatigue.

Thus,

Thus, my *Frank*, have I given you the trivial transactions of the day. My knowledge of the strength and liveliness of your imagination incites me to be so particular, in order that, as you are acquainted with the humour and disposition of each member of this little community, except *Eliza*, you may fancy yourself a partaker in all our innocent amusements and conversation, and if I may be permitted to judge of your heart by my own, you will not think me too minute or tedious. Adieu, my dear friend. May every good angel protect you, and render your busy scene of life equally profitable, and inoffensive, with that of the happy family I am at present with.

A. B.

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LETTER

LETTER III.

I thank you, my friend, for the packet I have just received, and congratulate both you and myself on your third advancement, as I flatter myself you have now made three steps towards our happy climate, for, surely, when once the pecuniary wishes of your friends are answered, you will not be so infatuated, as to continue in your exile, or they so unnatural, as not to solicit your return to honest England, where liberty and plenty hold their uninterrupted reign; but this is an event that must be submitted to time, that slow, though certain remedy for every evil.

I will now give you some particulars of this peaceful mansion, and its appertenances. The situation of it is delightful, and very little indebted

debted to art. The gardens are pleasant, though stuffed with gloomy bowers, in opposition to our modern improvements ; and however unfashionable this may be, yet it is not without its beauties. You will find a very picturesque description of them in the following lines :

Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,

And half the platform but reflects the other.
What renders this Gothick taste agreeable to them is, the satisfaction they alternately enjoy in being sheltered from the midday-heat, under these friendly shades, where the ladies, as the worthy servant informed me, amuse themselves, in providing the first dresses, for every little stranger their poor neighbours are likely to introduce into life, whilst the Gentleman entertains them with such authors, as, you may be assured, must infallibly improve.

I strolled into the garden, at an early hour being invited by the chearful inhabitants of our tutour's groves, and the beauty of the morning. I soon perceived, *Eliza* had been up some time before me, notwithstanding it was yet little more than six o'clock, and on expressing my surprise to an old man that was employed in rolling a grass-walk, he told me, that her usual hour of rising was between five and six, to which unpolite custom there is no doubt but she is in a great measure indebted for that lovely vermilion which constantly adorns her cheeks, and is no inconsiderable addition to the native lustre of her fine blue eyes.

Had it been her lot to have spent any time in the Beau Monde, she might, perhaps, have acquired taste enough to prefer Spanish arts to the beautiful tint of Nature; but this is mere-

merely a perhaps, for so much does she admire, what is perfectly genuine in every other respect, that it is more than probable she would have continued incorrigible in this particular likewise, as the prejudices of education are not easily overcome.

It is to be lamented, that so little attention is paid to this important article by those few mothers who condescend to take upon them the direction of their daughters educations, as well as those ladies who preside over the schools and seminaries of female literature; the first impression their tender minds receive being usually the strongest, and so much depending upon it, that the giving a right or wrong bent to the judgement and inclinations is fairly to be imputed to it.

The breakfast-summons assembled this little family together, when the usual enquiries were made concerning
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ing my repose and health. I assured them, (and it was really a fact) that I had not enjoyed so much tranquillity since the commencement of my father's melancholy disorder, as I had done the preceding night, for, continued I, addressing myself to my tutor, the arguments, you, Sir, so kindly made use of last night, to reconcile me to the dispensations of Providence, operated like an opiate, and lulled my cares into a pleasing oblivion.

This reply introduced a subject relative to the sudden illness and departure of my dear father, which engaged us for some time, on the conclusion of which, at my request, the morning was spent in alternate reading and commenting upon the most striking passages of some of our best English writers. The only families, with which Mr. *Parker* has any great connexion, are his Patron's,

Patron's, and a plain village apothecary's. The former (*Sir John Darlington*) has an uncommon reserve in his disposition, which carries the appearance of pride, and, I must confess, is to me very forbidding. My tutor, however, assures me, my unfavourable impression of this gentleman will be removed on an improvement of our acquaintance; I will not be too positive, but I find myself far gone in infidelity.

His lady has a tincture of the same humour, though easy and well-bred. Her silence, I am persuaded, arises from her good sense and complacency to *Sir John*. They have a son and a daughter, but as they are both children, I shall not introduce them to your acquaintance.

Mr. Simpson, the apothecary, is a man of universal reputation, and a meek and gentle demeanour; he is the echo of a neighbouring physician

cian whom I greatly dislike, and happily have little or no connexion with. Mr. *Simpson* has one daughter, a woman of thirty, with all the gaiety and giddiness of a girl of fifteen. She has had a great deal of money expended in her education, and has acquired just so much knowledge as to render herself ridiculous, and affectation sufficient to disgust a fribble. She has cast abundance of lures to attract my observation. I do, indeed, observe her, but it is in a disadvantageous light, and merely as she is a foil to her amiable contrast *Eliza*, who has the art of appearing so unconscious of her own superiour merit, that, were it not a reflection on her understanding, I should verily conclude, that she believed herself entirely upon an equality with this piece of artificial deformity.

With

FAMILY PICTURES. 41

With the occasional company and conversation of the above-mentioned neighbours, and our valuable morning-amusements, which we constantly repeat, we vary our lives here very agreeably, pleasing and pleased with each other.

Madam Luna has now made one entire revolution since my arrival at this blissful seat, and is a second time declining; tell me then ingenuously, my friend, if you do not begin to think, it is time I should remember, there is such a place on this terrestrial ball as Bentley-hall.

Alas! notwithstanding my affected gaiety, it is with the utmost reluctance I admit the recollection, as I have great reason to apprehend, that the remedy I sought in this retirement for my former disagreeable reflections, will prove an infinite aggravation of them.

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I should be a stranger to these tender sensations, were you, the companion of my heart, within my reach, and, instead of dreading, as I really do, the approaching hour of my departure, I should welcome it as the happiest of my life; but Bentley-hall with only *Daniel* and his hounds is more terrible to my apprehension than even the deserts of Arabia would be, either with you, or the company I now enjoy.

To separate myself from my good tutor, his agreeable wife, and the much more agreeable *Eliza* is a task, I am convinced, I shall perform with a very ill grace, but I must submit to cruel necessity, and perhaps the sooner the better.

I am resolved, therefore, this very day, Monday August the 4th, to communicate my intention of leaving them; so adieu for the present, my much loved friend, and expect
to

to receive my next from another place.

Tuesday morning. Here am I got again to my scribbling without having had sufficient courage to put my yesterday's resolution in practice.

As you are at so great a distance, I will boldly acknowledge to you all my weaknesses, though I have in reality too good an opinion of your candour, to suspect you to be capable of rallying a friend under such disagreeable circumstances, had you neither sea nor land to intercept your will; and in this confidence I give you the particulars of my present condition.

My countenance has absolutely contracted an unusual chagrin, and many sighs involuntarily escape me, insomuch, that this amiable family have acknowledged that they are both alarmed and surpris'd at the sudden alteration, so apparently visible

44 FAMILY PICTURES.

ble in my countenance and deportment.

They are far, however, I am certain, from suspecting the cause, as I intimated, the morning after my arrival, my motives for making them a visit at that juncture, and I doubt not but they expect my continuance with them, at least for three months.

I know not why, but I really experience some new and some extraordinary sensibilities, which I can no more account for than my friends can for my altered looks and behaviour.

The image of the lovely *Eliza* is ever occurring to my imagination, which occasions a pleasing softness in my heart, I do not wish to lose. It is not love, my *Frank*, I forbid that construction, but it is owing to a very striking resemblance, between my dear mother, and this worthy girl, both in person, manners,

ners, and disposition; whose memory, you are sensible, I have ever cherished with the most tender regard. I can now form an imperfect judgement of what the separation from such a woman must have cost my father. Nor, indeed, did he ever entirely conquer that affliction to the last hour of his life. I wonder, in reality, that he survived it so long; but he had my brother and I, in some measure, to divert his thoughts, whereas who shall I have to perform that friendly office by me when——when what——I start at my own reflections, but am not, however, disingenuous in adding, when I am separated from this agreeable family.

I am not sufficiently composed at present to enter into a close examination of myself, but the next account you hear from me, shall be perfectly clear, and free from ambiguity,

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guity, until which I shall remain as usual,

Yours,

A. B.



LETTER IV.

O *Frank*, I thus hastily resume my pen to tell thee, I have met with my punishment, ample punishment, for attempting to impose both upon you and myself.

You, undoubtedly, have found me out long ago, for I perceive on casting my eye cursorily over my undispached letter, that the amiable *Eliza* has begun, and ended every line; but take my confession in form, and then absolve me, if you can.

Several days elapsed, before I could so far subdue my heart-felt weakness, as even to flatter myself
I

I was equal to one advance towards a separation from this family. But this morning (too early for me to be suspected of wanting valour) I persuaded myself, that one struggle alone was sufficient, to conquer my idle pusillanimity, and that that hour, or never, it must be put in execution.

I, therefore, went down to breakfast brimful of resolute and heroick intentions, when, entering the parlour, I was surprised to find no one but my tutor at the tea-table, (on which were placed only two cups and saucers instead of the wonted number) and with visible dejection in his countenance. My heart felt an alarm it could hardly sustain, and I enquired with much trepidation, where Miss and Mrs. *Parker* were. The good Divine, with an emotion he vainly endeavoured to suppress, replied, “ My dear child is taken
sud-

suddenly ill; my wife is with her in her apartment, and begs your excuse for not attending at breakfast."

A clap of thunder, though ever so tremendous, could not have operated more strongly upon my soul than this intelligence. Suddenly ill, repeated I with the utmost agitation, Miss *Eliza* taken suddenly ill; when, recollecting myself a little, I said with rather more composure, I hope, she is in no danger? "I hope not, replied Mr. *Parker*, but as our *Eliza* has never had the small-pox, every trifling disorder fills us with apprehensions. I tremble, continued the good man, to find my affections so entirely engrossed (as I have now reason to be convinced they are) by this dear girl, lest for my punishment the Almighty should deprive me of her; I am, indeed, highly culpable, for I have made a treasure, an idol of her, without
con-

considering, that she was, perhaps, only lent me for a tryal, and to bring me by her early departure to a conviction of the frailty and presumption of my heart in thus daring to over-value a piece of mortality."

I was unable to offer the least consolation to this good parent, and therefore a profound silence ensued during our short breakfast, our appetites sympathizing with each other. At length, the physician already mentioned, having been sent to, arrived, and threw me by his horrid and unexpected appearance into fresh discomposure and disorder.

He was conducted upstairs by the fond father, and I waited their return, with the agitation of a condemned criminal, flattered with the expectation of a reprieve.

At last the man of skill and copious periwig quitted the dear girl's apartment, and entered the parlour,

D where

where I still continued. Though I had been at the utmost pains to prepare myself for his reception, I enquired rather too hastily after his lovely patient. The physician declared, in terms that did honour to the faculty, that the symptoms were certainly very favourable, but as certainly denoted the approach of a disagreeable distemper; but, added he, as Miss *Parker's* habit of body is naturally good, I hope, there is no danger. Is it the small-pox then? interrogated I with visible disorder. Undoubtedly, Sir, replied this great man, and I have prescribed accordingly; there is a draught to be taken, added he, immediately; you'll please to let it be sent for, addressing himself to Mr. *Parker*, as soon as your servant returns. I took the liberty of sending him a couple of miles about, to deliver a message for me, but he cannot be long.

I could scarcely contain myself at the conclusion of this speech. My beloved *Eliza* to be neglected for any other business upon earth appeared to me highly unreasonable, and I therefore insisted upon carrying doctor *Dent's* prescription myself to the apothecary, lest Miss *Parker* might suffer by the delay.

My tutor strenuously opposed me in this particular, and said, he was the properest person to perform that office, but I could not persuade myself, that even this affectionate father could do this important business so effectually as your humble servant; I therefore caught up the prescription, and, upon the wings of love, flew to this subordinate of the sons of *Æsculapius*, or rather their co-operator.

I waited while the dexterous pharmaceutick prepared the prescribed potion, and then with the

D 2

quick-

quickest-dispatch conveyed it to my tutor.

Had Mr. *Parker's* mind been less discomposed, he would have easily penetrated the motions by which I was actuated, nor have imputed that merely to the natural goodness of my disposition, which was incited by much tenderer sentiments than I had ever before experienced.

Mr. *Parker*, afterwards, offered to attend me into the garden as usual, but I declared that, unless he would treat me in a friendly and unceremonious manner, nor give me the least reason to suspect that I occasioned him the smallest constraint, I would quit his house immediately. Upon this declaration we separated, the good Divine retiring to his closet, and your disconsolate friend (now the indisputable lover of *Eliza*) strolled into the garden.

Alas!

Alas! how changed the scene; the walks, the shades, the melody of birds, the beauty of the flowers yielded no more to me the least delight. The so much frequented alcove, in which I had enjoyed such heart-felt satisfaction, only contributed to increase my uneasiness. A train of wounding reflections obtruded themselves to my imagination, and I could not help often repeating to myself, *There was the dear creature's seat, to which, perhaps, she will never, never more return; there would she talk, good Gods, how she would talk!* I then, in order to divert my thoughts, gathered a rose, and would have contemplated its beauty, but in vain; it only brought to my recollection *Colin's* lamentation for the absence of his admired Phoebe, which I think so very natural and poetical, that I will make no,

apology for indulging myself with transcribing the whole stanza.

" Rose, what is become of thy delicate hue ?

" And where is the violet's beautiful blue ?

" Does ought of its sweetness the blossom
beguile ?

" That meadow, those daisies, why do they
not smile ?

" Ah rivals, I see, what it was that you dress,

" And made yourselves fine for ; a place in
her breast.

" You put on your colours, to pleasure her
eye,

" To be plucked by her hand, on her bosom
to die."

You know, *Frank*, I have never had this distemper, yet such is my infatuation, that I shall industriously preserve it a secret, lest I should be hurried from the house of my *Eliza*, which would be worse to me than death. I am, therefore, determined, at all events, to preserve my continuance.

Having

Having spent some time in the manner I have described, I returned to the house, but my heart, as I approached, underwent the most terrible palpitations, lest I should hear some bad news concerning my *Eliza*. Happily my fears were needless, for she continued much the same till the third day, when her disorder began to show itself, and proved to be a very favourable sort. We were so happy as to have a period put to our suspense the seventh day, the distemper arriving then to so early a crisis, that her physician declared, his fair patient was quite out of danger. There is, however, a misfortune in store for this virtuous family, which they little apprehended would have come upon them. How shall I tell you, that I have been this afternoon seized with sickness and pain? but before I would suffer the physician to examine my

D 4 pulse,

pulse, (too conscious of the disorder by which I supposed myself attacked) I begged to speak with my tutor in private.

“My friend, said I, what apology shall I make to you for bringing this new affliction upon you? I am afraid, I have caught this unhappy infection, and am sensible the symptoms are not the most promising. I must beg, you will take care of these few papers, and should the consequence of my indiscretion prove fatal, I entreat you will yourself examine the contents in the presence of my brother *Daniel*, and take the trouble of informing him, that I declared to you, it was my last will and testament, and put by me as such into your hands.”

You cannot be surprised, knowing what you do of my heart, when I tell you, that I have entitled my *Eliza* by the deeds, with which I
have

have intrusted her father, to all my personal estate and effects, reserving only a small legacy or token of remembrance for you, as, by inheriting the paternal part, my brother will acquire more than, I fear, he will make an honourable use of.

I am well acquainted with the small provision Mr. *Parker* is able to make for this amiable girl, and I, therefore, considered this disposition merely as a common act of justice, as it was my intention, if I had escaped, or if I survive this malady, to solicit her participation of the whole.

These my private sentiments I have never yet given the slightest intimation of, nor have I informed this worthy man, of what nature the papers are, I have lodged in his custody, but have specified my motives at large in the preamble to my will.

Mr. *Parker* appeared most sensibly affected, both at my expressions, and the cause of them; but it was in vain for him, to reflect that this evil might have been avoided by my having timely quitted his family. Without allowing him time to reply, I resumed, “I read, Sir, your friendly concern in your countenance, but I have further to request, that you would endeavour to get a room for me at Mr. *Simpson's*, for I am determined not to become an incumbrance to this family.”

“That, I assure you, you shall not, returned Mr. *Parker* with a friendly warmth, for I would as soon part with my own child, as turn you out under such circumstances. You shall have your own apartment prepared for you, and I will endeavour to procure you a good nurse. It is in vain for you, to oppose my resolution, continued he, (perceiving I
was

was about to reply) for you shall submit to my management. But let us not be too premature in our judgments, but consult Mr. *Dent*, before we proceed any farther."

The physician was summoned immediately, and soon confirmed our apprehensions, and, assuming a most dolorous countenance, added, that, if the young gentleman was sensible he never had had that disorder, and chose to expose himself in the manner he had done, it would have been proper to have made some physical preparation, that he might have taken the infection more kindly.

But whatever may be the consequence of this alarming distemper, do not you, my dear friend, impute either rashness or presumption to me, in having thus exposed myself to a contagion which, perhaps, might have overtaken me, had I attempted to fly from it. I could not have

answered it to my conscience to have rushed into a certain danger any more than I can reconcile either to my reason or religion the notion of escaping the hand of Providence. You may, possibly, be inclined to place my conscientiousness on this occasion to another cause; do what you please by it, I am all submission, but must declare you to be an incompetent judge of the reasonableness or propriety of my proceedings, while your own heart remains untouched by the gentle flame with which mine has been some time inspired.

My pen and ink is seized by my good tutor, which, indeed, I am now able to make but very little use of farther, and I am only permitted to add, that in all conditions, prosperous or adverse, sick or well, nay, (if some systems be true) alive or dead, I shall ever remain yours.

A. B.
Mr.

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Mr. *Bentley* being now incapacitated for writing, I must inform my readers, from true reports, of the intermediate occurrences.

Mr. *Parker* was sincerely distressed, in what manner to break this unlucky accident to his wife. He knew, she had an extreme affection for Mr. *Bentley*, and apprehended, that one misfortune, so suddenly succeeded by another, might be too much for her (at best) but delicate spirits. However, as it was inevitable, he went into *Eliza's* apartment, and, after chatting some time, said to the good mother, "My dear, I should be glad to speak with you."

Eliza felt not the least alarm, her nurse being present, and Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* withdrew together.

The good husband, with the utmost tenderness, begged his dear
Louisa

Louisa not to be shocked, but that *Mr. Bentley* was not very well, and it was *Mr. Dent's* opinion, the disorder was likely to prove the small-pox.

“ Good God, cried *Mrs. Parker*, what is it you tell me ! surely, my dear, this is very unfortunate.”

I confess it, does appear so, replied *Mr. Parker*, on the first reflection, but, perhaps, it may be happy in its consequence. This young gentleman, very probably, might not have passed his days without this affliction, and as he has not now either father or mother to perform the same kind offices for him, we have been so industriously engaged in for our *Eliza*, where could it have happened so well, as under the roof of his sincere friends ? The Almighty has been so gracious as to spare our child to our fond wishes, then let us not murmur at this visitation.”

—Mrs.

Mrs. *Parker* felt the intended force of this argument, and it had the desired effect upon her heart. She, therefore, chearfully gave due directions for every necessary preparation, to accommodate the unfortunate gentleman in the best manner, who by eleven at night grew quite delirious.

Yet even then his imagination was continually employed upon his beloved *Eliza*. The doctor and nurse had but little hope, his blood, from the violent agitations his spirits had undergone, being in a very bad state, and he was as miserably afflicted by this cruel distemper, as any being ever was, who survived it, and it was apprehended for a long time that he would have lost one of his eyes.

In this lamentable condition did he continue full three weeks. The physician and apothecary attended him

him the whole night that was judged most critical, and expected every moment (for some hours) to be his last.

It pleased God, however, to support him beyond their expectation, and they were convinced by morning, the dangerous period was over.

With this agreeable news they revived the drooping spirits of Mr. and Mrs. *Parker*. As for *Eliza*, they had detained her under various pretences in her chamber, without the least knowledge of Mr. *Bentley's* sufferings, until they had it in their power to inform her that he was upon the recovery.

This was, however, merely the effect of that tender consideration, in which they ever held their daughter's repose, and not from the smallest suspicion, that her heart was at all particularly interested on his account. It was, nevertheless, a happy pre-

precaution ; for the gentle *Eliza* was but too sensible of Mr. *Bentley's* merit, to have enjoyed much tranquillity, had she been acquainted with his deplorable condition.

At the expiration of one fortnight, after the turn of his distemper, this gentleman was capable of being conveyed into the dining-room, and of receiving the congratulatory compliments of his friends.

Eliza happened to see him, as he was carryed in a chair, unperceived by the young gentleman, and was extremely shocked at the unhappy alteration in him, which had occasioned the poor lover himself an infinite share of chagrin. He had too much good sense, indeed, to suffer the least mortification from any value he set upon his person, but he was not sure, that it might not injure him in the eyes of the only woman he had ever been ambitious of being
ap-

approved by; and as lovers are always tormenting themselves with unnecessary fears, he imagined she could not behold him without both horror and disapprobation.

He did the young lady, however, great injustice in his conjectures, for notwithstanding she really felt some concern at his sudden metamorphosis, yet she had a mind incapable of being very deeply affected by externals, and consequently whatever effect that alteration might have upon her with regard to his person, her esteem for his internal qualities still remained unshaken.

These were the attractions that had wrought upon her, attractions whose lustre was not to be impaired by disease, and therefore she felt not the least abatement of that cordial approbation she had begun to entertain of him before her own and his illness. She secretly thanked heaven, how-

however, that her face had not undergone the same fate, as such an event, she feared, might have destroyed every part of that admiration which Mr. *Bentley* had betrayed towards her upon more than one occasion.

Such were the private sentiments and reflections of this young gentleman and lady, when an accident happened which furnished them with an opportunity of discovering the true state of each other's minds without reserve; but as Mr. *Bentley* was now become capable again of resuming his pen, my readers are to gather their information of it from the ensuing epistle.



LETTER V.

Congratulate me, my friend, on my happy recovery. At last, thank God, I am just able to tell
you,

you, that I am restored to health, but such a spectacle, you would be shocked even at a description of me. I have, indeed, been most miserably mauled. How I shall appear in the eyes of my *Eliza*, I know not, but think, I may rely upon the goodness of her understanding, as well as the excellency of her heart, as a sufficient security for me from contempt; and pity, you know, is a tender passion. I will give you the particulars of this much dreaded interview some time hence, for I find myself too weak to add any more at this juncture; therefore must bid you adieu.



MR. BENTLEY *in continuation.*

THE day is over, my *Frank*, and I have had the satisfaction to discover, that the mind of the dear object of my tenderest regard is
not

not within the reach of common accidents.

At eleven o'clock my good tutor repaired to the dining-room, in order to be ready there to receive and welcome me on my happy enlargement, where I was in a short time after conveyed, for you must know, my feet are still so tender that I am not able to walk.

He received me with unfeigned pleasure, and shaking me gently by the hand, "I do, said he, I do consider this as a happy day, indeed, a day so much the happier, as I must now confess to you, that I really despaired at one time of seeing it. My wife and daughter too will equally rejoice with me, as we are now relieved from an unspeakable anxiety."

Thus spoke the good man; for my own part I would freely have given an ear, to know, whether my beloved *Eliza* had shown any uncommon

mon sensibility on my account, but it was a string too delicate to be touched upon, I therefore only replied, that I had not words to express the gratitude I felt for a family, who had taken so much care of me, during so dangerous an illness, but that I should endeavour to requite their goodness, by making them all the returns in my power, for the trouble I had occasioned them.

“ You owe us no returns, replied the worthy man, with all that benignity of countenance, so descriptive of the soul it is actuated by. What we did was only a common act of humanity; the merit of which is totally destroyed by the reflection, that you are the son of a gentleman whose memory we shall ever revere, and the pupil of that man that afforded you those little accommodations under his roof, which you have the means of purchasing from the greatest

est stranger. Another thing too which rendered such an act of humanity the more incumbent on us, is that you had contracted the distemper which gave occasion to it, under our roof, and by means of that very friendship which has rendered you so worthy of the utmost we can do to repair it."

"Ah, Sir," said I, "why should you endeavour to extenuate a good action merely because it is your own, when at the same time you would not fail to extol it in any other person?"

"Mr. Bentley, returned he with great earnestness, if I have rendered you any service, I am sufficiently repayed by your bare acknowledgements; do not, therefore, hurt me with any more professions of this kind, but consult your own heart, and whatever estimation you would be inclined to set upon a similar kindness to a child of mine, such
only

only I can allow you to set upon this."

Before I could reply, we were joined by Mrs. *Parker* and her amiable daughter, the tender and complaisant behaviour of whom, particularly of the latter, abundantly compensated for all my sufferings, and the hours glided away unperceived.

I am now, my friend, in possession of the utmost felicity. My *Louisa* and I are no longer a stranger to the sentiments of each other's heart. We enjoy a succession of interview without interruption, and all our talk is love. *'Twas ever musick when she spoke, but now she speaks encouragement, 'tis little less than rapture.* I fancy, I must be a very dull correspondent to a man of your singular insensibility, but *Frank* take the advice of a friend; resist not the impulse of this generous passion, if
ever

ever you should feel it, for it certainly ennobles the heart, harmonizes the soul, and exalts and improves every rational faculty we are endowed with.

Sir *John Darlington's* seat (who I informed you before is our tutor's patron) lies about three little miles distant from our dwelling. His only son had the misfortune, the very day of my emerging from my sick-apartment, to break his leg by jumping for a wager with some of his companions. The company of Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* was so earnestly solicited on the occasion by this afflicted family, that they could not possibly refuse it, and for one whole week they were conveyed in this gentleman's carriage to *Darlington*

E to

to breakfast, and not restored to us again till ten at night.

To *Eliza* in the mean while was committed the care and entertainment of thy happy friend, (who at every hour seemed to make some farther advance towards a perfect recovery) but was forbid by his wife physician venturing out too soon on no less penalty than his life.

The second afternoon that I enjoyed this charming tête-à-tête, my obliging girl amused me with reading *Thompson's* Spring; at the conclusion of which is his delightful description of conjugal happiness.

My mind was so sweetly agitated by the elegance, the delicacy and beauty of the expressions, and the accent, and attractive graces of the object, on which my eyes were feasting,

ing, that I could not refrain from saying, "has not this poet, Miss *Parker*, drawn a most engaging picture of that felicity which arises from the union of hearts?" "I have replied my fair companion, often read it over with pleasure and approbation, and I cannot help thinking that my Papa and Mamma have experienced it in a very eminent degree."

"I am really of the same opinion, returned I, and I further believe, that whoever is so happy as to be approved of by Miss *Parker*, will not fall short of her Papa and Mamma in point of happiness." The beautiful cheek of my *Eliza* was immediately painted with a crimson die, which your friend's vanity construed into no unfavourable symptom.

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tom. “Doubtless, proceeded I, there is a mortal for whom this happiness is reserved, notwithstanding he has never visited here since my arrival.”

“I assure you, Sir, replied *Eliza*, with the smile of a Madona, if there is a person upon earth that holds me in the kind estimation you mention, he has not yet declared himself.”

“Then I’ll answer for him, interrupted I, with an emotion I had not the power to restrain, he has suppressed the tender secret merely from the apprehension of giving you offence, or of not meeting with your approbation. Can you, Miss *Parker*, can you pardon me, if I presume to declare that I am in that very condition, and had it not been

I, been for my unconquerable attachment to you, I might, perhaps, (for some years at least) have escaped the ravage of my late merciless distemper. For had my life been the forfeit of my continuance, I could not have had the resolution to tear myself from this happy habitation, untill you had surmounted this alarming calamity."

Nor do I now repent it, as I might, probably, have been attacked with the same violence at some future period, and it would be a thousand times more satisfactory to my heart, that the woman who could generously accept of me for her companion through life, should see me at the very worst advantage.

"I dare believe, Mr. Bentley, replied the gentle maid with great modesty and sweetness, would never

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make choice of such a light mind, as
exteriour accomplishments could ei-
ther bias or affect. The eye is too
much exposed to take in false views
and deceptions for reality, to be
trusted on such an important occa-
sion."

"I confess, Madam, said I again,
interrupting her, this declaration is
very abrupt, and, indeed, at this
juncture unintended ; but since acci-
dent and circumstance has drawn it
from me, I cannot recede, there-
fore must entreat you to condescend
to inform me with that amiable
frankness, by which your heart is
governed, whether I am so ex-
ceptionable in your eyes, as for it
to be impossible, by the utmost ten-
derness and assiduity, to render my-
self

self in any degree acceptable to you?"

I really pityed the dear creature's apparent uneasiness on the occasion, which was, undoubtedly, rendered the more so, as she had no third person to relieve her, and a question of such importance, so closely put, could not but confuse her at any time. However, after a little pause, she replied, though not without much hesitation; "I am determined, Sir, to adhere to those excellent maxims of frankness and sincerity you have been pleased to impute to me, and acknowledge myself so far superiour to the little vanity of giving pain to a worthy heart, that I do not even wish to possess the power."

Her voice here became quite ex-

ting, and I was obliged to sooth her into more confidence. “What, said I, Miss *Parker*, why should you hesitate on this occasion? I am no stranger to yourself or family, nor is the tender affection I bear you, a youthful flight. I am but just restored, as it were, from the brink of the grave. My spirits weak, my heart unequal to the torments of suspense. Then speak it peace, Madam, and begin once more those pleasing accents; assume the generous courage to relieve a friend, whose happiness entirely depends upon your sentiments of him.”

“I, Sir, returned *Eliza* somewhat reassured, was only going to add, that Mr. *Bentley* had very little to apprehend from my severity, as it has ever been my custom, since I

was

was first capable of distinguishing, to esteem the friends of my Papa and Mamma."

My heart bounded with joy at this obliging condescension; "and may I flatter myself, said I, that if I can obtain the sanction of that worthy Papa and Mamma, Miss *Parker* will consent to bestow her hand upon me? What a complication of disagreeable apprehensions would then be banished from my breast! Could I tell you but half I have suffered from the bare thought of a separation, I am so well acquainted with your humane disposition, as to be sensible that you would feel the utmost pleasure in conferring so much happiness. I would not for the world distress you; but if I do not presume too far, I would solicit

E 5

your

your kind permission, to propose myself to my much loved friend, as the uncertainty my mind has laboured under, I can with great truth assure you, has in a very great degree retarded my recovery."

"I have such an opinion of your honour, replied my *Eliza* with the most lovely confusion, that I cannot apprehend an impropriety from you, nor shall I ever oppose my Papa's authority or inclination."

You would, doubtless, imagine, if I was not to tell you, that I gently pressed to my happy lips the almost unresisting hand of my beloved girl. "Forgive me, I beseech you, said I, the liberty I now take, but this transition from a gloomy suspense to the utmost felicity is too much

much for me to bear with moderation.”.

There is a love-scene for you now, *Frank*. I may, perhaps, be ridiculous, but I will be faithful. You, I doubt not, *jest at scars*, because you *never felt a wound*, but live in fear; your hour is yet to come. Let that consideration induce you to spare, as you would be spared, one who in a humble confidence of your candour, lenity and so forth, has here exposed himself to the severity of your raillery.

A. B.



LETTER VI.

IT is now a long, a very long time that I have spent in the expectation of receiving some account of my much esteemed friend Silence alarms me greatly, and is, indeed, an infinite alloy to the satisfaction I feel in my present happy state. I will not, however, suffer myself to be subdued by the bare anticipation of calamities, but proceed to the winding up of my innocent amour, by the completion of which, I hope, I shall be relieved from my suspense and apprehensions in the manner most agreeable to my wishes.

I need

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I need not, I believe, suspect you of so little attention to the interesting adventures of your friend, as to judge it necessary to repeat the situation, in which my last epistle left me and my beloved *Eliza*. Had you, *Frank*, ever trod the soft path of affection, you would be able to conceive, that Sir *John's* coach set down Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* at their own habitation very unseasonably, as it happened to set them down at such a juncture. They very soon reached the dining-room, and expressed an agreeable surprise at finding that dejection, which had so long hung upon my brow, entirely dispelled.

My mind was, indeed, relieved from its utmost anxiety, but nevertheless

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theless my impatience to communicate my wishes to my friend, and my beloved's father would not permit me to enjoy perfect tranquillity. I cast about, therefore, for an opportunity to introduce it that night, but found it utterly impracticable, and thus was obliged, much against my inclination, to postpone my intention 'till the morning.

I amused myself the greatest part of the night in suggesting a proper address to my tutor, and notwithstanding I had a very probable assurance of not only succeeding, but even of being considered as an honourable alliance, yet two or three bugbears would obtrude themselves to my imagination.

At length the morning arrived, and put a period to every chimerical,

cal, as well as real apprehension. The first thing I did was to seek Mr. *Parker*, and beg him to favour me with one half hour's private audience in his study. The good man complied immediately with my request, but not without some token of surprise ; recollecting, however, as he afterwards acknowledged, the papers I had entrusted him with, when seized with my late illness, he concluded it might be relative to them.

We took our seats tête-à-tête, and I, after two or three preparatory hems, began in the manner following: " I doubt not, Sir, but my soliciting your private ear has a little astonished you, but it is, indeed, a matter of the utmost consequence I have to open to you, and on the
success

success of which no less than the happiness of my future life depends. You, Sir, have the full power of determining it without appeal, and surely Mr. *Parker's* voice will not be against me."

"I confess myself greatly amazed, replied the divine, at this solemn introduction. Can Mr. *Bentley* at this time of day want assurances of my inclination to serve him, if he can point out the means? I am sorry he has so little reliance upon my sincerity, as to entertain the least shadow of doubt concerning the inclination."

"My doubts, Sir, returned I, are not of you, but myself. You have a daughter, which will easily account for my diffidence, when I tell you, it is her I would solicit. Can
you,

you, Sir, consent to entrust me with such an inestimable treasure, as the happiness of your justly beloved child? Can you accept of me for your son, and think me worthy to become the husband and protector of her.?"

Mr. *Parker's* eyes instantly sparkled with pleasure and approbation; "and could you, Sir, said he, know so little of your friend's disposition, as to question your not being obliged in a respect, so apparently for the interest of the obliger, as to deprive his compliance of every grace? This, continued he, is a happiness and honour I little dreamt of, nor could my fondest partiality for her have induced me to look up to one of your fortune and (as he was pleased to say) merits for an establishment

blishment for my poor *Eliza*. Be assured, Sir, I shall bestow her upon you with a satisfaction equal to the utmost you (as a fond lover) can feel in receiving her. I will immediately prepare my wife and her to give you a reception suitable to that consideration your alliance entitles you to from such little folks, as we are."

"But Sir, said I, do you think, I may flatter myself with obtaining Mrs. *Parker's* consent, as happily as I have your's?"

"I can answer for her, replied he, nor will I pay my *Eliza* so ill a compliment, as to suppose her blind to your (you must have it, my friend, or I spoil the speech) great merit. I am confident, her heart has no previous engagement, and that

that is a sufficient foundation for every other dependence."

"I, Sir, am so happy, returned *Anthony Bentley*, as not to be entirely ignorant of Miss *Eliza's* obliging sentiments of me, and confess, I obtained an indirect permission from her for offering myself to you in the character I have done. In such a particular, as the approbation of a heart, I hope, you will excuse me, for making my first application to its immediate possessor.

Had I not proceeded in this manner, I acknowledge, I should have been apprehensive, that Miss *Parker's* inclination had received a considerable bias from the partial recommendations of my friends."

"I sincerely rejoice at it, replied

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plied this affectionate parent, as well as approve the method you have pursued. I am relieved by it from the only hard part I should have had to act. I know the gentleness and implicit obedience of my child's disposition, and as there is no answering for the caprice of human inclination, had this proposal come first from me, her compliance could not have been so evidently the result of her own option, as it now is, and I have the double felicity of obtaining a son unexceptionable beyond my most flattering expectations, and of having the voluntary concurrence of the child of my heart indisputably confirmed."

The appearance of a servant, despatched by Mrs. *Parker*, to inform us breakfast waited, here broke
off

off our conversation, and brought us immediately into the dining-room.

I will now, my *Frank*, allow myself a few days respite from scribbling, as a little time will either give me, by the arrival of the East-India fleet, the satisfaction of a letter from you, or determine me to add a few more particulars to this, and despatch it in quest of you. Pleased with you I cannot be, until my anxiety concerning your welfare is removed, nor will the spirit of resentment or unkindness ever dwell in my heart against that friend, whom to esteem and love was almost the first sensation it was sensible of. I therefore shall commit both my paper and cares for the few intermediate days to my
escrutoire,

escrutoire, and support myself with the light camelion-food of chearing hope.



I Shall take occasion, during Mr. *Bentley's* cessation from writing, to lay before my reader some few particulars, out of the reach of his knowledge.

When *Eliza* retired to her chamber the evening of the day in which Mr. *Bentley* had declared himself her lover, she revolved in her mind each tender profession he had made, and recollected a thousand instances, which at the time they happened had appeared only as general things, and confirmed to her willing credulity the reality of his affection for her. In the midst of these

these pleasing reflections an unlucky thought occurred. This was, how she should bear a separation from her Papa and Mamma, or they from her. She then fancied, it would be an heroick, as well as dutiful action to sacrifice the man she loved, with every apparent advantage of his alliance, to her consideration for their peace.

But, interrogated the advocate of Mr. *Bentley*, starting up suddenly in her heart, will it not be promoting that very end, to comply with the gentleman's request? Will it not be inexpressibly satisfactory to them to see their daughter so advantageously disposed of; for surely a man, with a most unexceptionable heart, and in possession of

of seven hundred pounds per annum, to make choice of a girl whose utmost expectation is three or four hundred pounds, is a most extraordinary circumstance. At last she concluded her reflections with the wise determination of submitting entirely to the disposition of her parents, as she might very easily do without the least danger of having any violence offered to her own inclinations.

Eliza had not mentioned one syllable of Mr. *Bentley's* declaration to her Mamma, as she supposed her lover would not keep his designs long secret, so that Mrs. *Parker* was a perfect stranger to that unusual pleasure, which she so visibly perceived in the countenance of her beloved partner, on
his

his taking his seat at the breakfast-table.

She felt her curiosity excited to an uncommon pitch on the account, but forbore every enquiry, 'till she should have a more convenient opportunity; but *Eliza's* heart immediately suggested to her the cause, and she felt an additional approbation for her lover from his assiduity concerning her.

Doctor *Dent* called upon them during their breakfasting, and declared that his patient was most amazingly improved since his last visit, which had been made within the preceeding four and twenty hours, and voluntarily took off his restriction of a longer confinement, only recommending caution and moderation in the first recovery of

F his

his liberty. Mr. *Bentley* was delighted with the thoughts of once more breathing the fresh air, and revisiting those shady recesses, accompanied by the only object that could enable him to reap the true enjoyment of them. As soon as the doctor had taken his leave, Mr. *Bentley* begged the favour of *Eliza's* company into the garden, which, though a common request, she could not comply with without betraying an unusual consciousness.

Mr. *Parker* was glad to have it in his power by the young people's assurances to communicate the felicity of his heart to his better part, as he frequently called his beloved *Louisa*. Mrs. *Parker's* joy was not at all inferiour to her husband's, and they mutually congratulated each other

other on this unexpected good fortune. "You see, my dear, said Mr. *Parker*, how amply it has pleased heaven to reward our diligence in performing only the common duties of humanity to our friend in affliction, by disposing his heart to relieve us from every anxious solicitude for the provision and disposition of our valuable child, by becoming himself her faithful friend and protector, in both which characters, I am persuaded, he will act agreeably to our utmost wishes.

Mr. *Bentley* having waited a whole week in expectation of a letter from his correspondent in the East-Indies, and not received one, he resumed his pen, in order to finish and dispatch the epistle he had began.

Mr. BENTLEY *in continuation of the*
VIth LETTER.

SURELY, my friend, something very extraordinary must be the cause of your unusual neglect of me. My affectionate concern for your happiness and health compels me to complain, and nothing is more certain than that I have not experienced such a trying circumstance at any period of my life on your account, as what I do now.

It is with difficulty I can prevail upon myself to continue my trifling narrative, from the apprehension of your heart being so far alienated from me, as to be wholly uninterested in those petty concerns which we have interchangeably remitted hitherto,

hitherto, and perused with pleasure and satisfaction.

I will, however, be patient for a few months longer, from the consideration, that I once gave you some grounds of suspicion with respect to me, which misfortune, not inclination, occasioned. May Heaven avert such evils from you, and grant, that mistake, not calamity to be the basis of my anxiety and disappointment. I should, by such an information, be compensated for all my sufferings.

I have now to tell you, that I have regained my liberty, and enjoy not only the pure air, but the purer delight of such a fair, tender and obliging companion, as our original parent was blessed with in his state of innocence.

She kindly accompanied me in my first ramble, and I designedly led her through those walks, in which I had so feelingly lamented the misfortune of her illness. There in the most emphatick terms I was Master of, I repeated to her the tender cares and sollicitudes I so lately experienced on her account.

“ I assure you, Sir, said the grateful maid, I was entirely unconscious of the obligation, I now find myself under to you. I did, indeed, conceive, that you would, both from friendship and the tenderness of your nature, sympathize in some measure in the affliction of my good father and mother during my sickness; but that any consideration for me could induce you to expose

pose yourself to the sufferings you have endured, I little imagined. I think, upon reflection, continued she smiling, I ought rather to call that action rash, than heroick, as combating with a wind-mill or any other extraordinary encounter of the famous knight of *La Manca* would, in my opinion, have been much more eligible, than such a choice."

"The word obligation, returned I, which you was pleased to make use of in the beginning of your speech, Madam, has blunted the edge of its satirical conclusion. I will confess, that the knight you mention never suffered more for his admired *Dulcinea* than I have done for a certain lady near me; but these flights, Madam, are disgraceful to

the sentiments I feel. Permit me, therefore, to entreat your serious consideration of the purest and most sincere affection that ever the heart of man was inspired with. In you, Miss *Eliza*, I promise myself, I shall find my joys reflected, and in your amiable conversation a remedy for all my cares. It is the mental companion, the tender friend, and the faithful repository for all the secrets of my soul, that I expect to receive from the hands of that excellent man, whose precepts alone could have made me capable of valuing so rich a present, as I ought. I have this morning received the highest confirmation of his unfeigned esteem, by his consenting so readily to bestow the worthiest possession

tion he is master of upon me. Miss *Parker* cannot think me too precipitate in thus early seeking a period to the tormenting suspense I have long endured. There is now only the advice of her Mamma wanting to render me completely happy."

Eliza was going to reply, when she perceived her Papa's approach. The good man, not suspecting that his company at that juncture was rather unseasonable, was coming to join us. We were, indeed, free from those alarms and mortifications, which those lovers are ever exposed to, who choose to apply for their friends and parents approbation and consent at the period of their courtships, or, perhaps, not 'till after the performance of the ceremony.

Were I writing for the press, I would here warn the tender, unexperienced maid from consenting to private interviews, even with the man whose intentions were truly honourable, as the dexterity, which clandestine meetings require, would but too probably rise in judgement against her, at a time, when she might least expect it; for life is subject to such an infinite variety of changes and chances, and the mind of man so frequently affected by them, that it is twenty to one but the same action, which was by the obliged lover magnified into the generous and meritorious, would by the reflecting husband be condemned, as the effect of a too fertile invention, and a mind turned for intrigue; and so ingenious are mortals,

mortals, when they are disposed to torment either themselves, or the object of their abated affection, that they can wrest a smile into an impropriety, and construe a less suspicious action, than what I have mentioned, into a levity of heart, unworthy their esteem.

If a man has a real affection for a woman, what necessity is there for all that secrecy? Ought not the approbation of his friends to be consulted? or if withheld from caprice or prejudice, time might, perhaps, overcome those impediments; and where esteem, not passion, is the motive by which they are actuated, surely to secure the interest or happiness of a beloved object, whole years, would not be spent in vain.

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I pity

I pity those young creatures, who rashly rush into a state, from which they can never disentangle themselves, without considering and guarding against disagreeable contingences; the largest stock of love being but very insufficient security either for peace or happiness, if friends are to be disobliged, fortune forfeited, or any other advantageous prospect to be obscured by the wished for union. It is setting out under such threatening auspices, as ought to deter all from entering upon it, and will, except the thoughtless and unwary. The recent conduct of one of this latter stamp led me into this digression which, I hope, you will pardon.

But to return. Mr. Parker entered the alcove. “*Eliza*, my dear,

dear, said he, at the request of your generous lover I am henceforth to consider you both as my children. I have revealed the agreeable news to your mother, at whose desire I thus act the common parent (taking his daughter's hand, and presenting it to me with an honest grace) in bestowing you, beyond the extent of our fondest ambition, upon this worthy gentleman, (mind that, *Frank*) and if a father's prayers and blessings can avail you, you will enjoy many, very many successive years of happiness."

I have now, my friend, concluded my little love-history, with which also I will conclude this letter, and do beseech you, if there should not be an epistle on its voyage to me, that you would immediately despatch

despatch one on the receipt of this letter, unless the tranquillity of your friend is become of no consequence, and you are determined to cast him off for ever. Adieu, my best wishes ever attend you.

A. B.



A few days after Mr. Bentley had sent off the above letter, he was surprised with the following lines from his friend, the gentleman, to whose care it had been entrusted, having neglected the sending of it untill he had been arrived in England some time.

Mr.



Mr. TAYLOR to Mr. BENTLEY.

Dear Sir,

I THINK myself bound by our long friendship and the real affection I bear you, to make you acquainted with a certain change in my condition, which must inevitably occasion a disagreeable change in my manner of life. I am no longer that *Frank Taylor* you esteem, but, allured by a golden bait, I have sacrificed my peace, my liberty, and am become a husband to a woman, possessed of no one accomplishment or recommendation upon earth, except thirty thousand pounds. My friends I am obliged to renounce, and am almost a prisoner in my own house,

house, in conformity to the strange disposition of an uninformed and capricious female. I have, indeed, the satisfaction of contemplating a-bundance of yellow ore, but neither the means, privilege nor power of enjoying it. How time may reconcile me to the character of a hen-pecked husband, or lighten my chains, I know not ; but at present I would willingly disengage myself at the expense of a limb. Our innocent correspondence that has been, I verily believe, on each part, for so many years pursued with unabated alacrity and delight, I am compelled to renounce. Were I not perfectly acquainted with your humanity, consideration and fidelity, I would never have submitted to this contemptible confession ; but no one shall

shall deprive me of the felicity of your company and conversation, which, I hope, in a very few months to be able to enjoy, untill which time I entreat you to suspend your curiosity concerning me. Judge me candidly, and be assured, that, notwithstanding my heart has once been subdued by sordid ambition, it still retains its wonted attachment to you, and impatiently wishes for an opportunity of giving you a verbal explication of the dark and concise hints which this paper contains. May you obtain the amiable object of your generous affection, I am inclined to believe, you will not fail of happiness, for I now entirely subscribe in my judgement to that assertion of *Prior's*, viz.

That

That which makes our lives delightful
 prove,
 Is a genteel sufficiency of love:

Though I have in my actions run
 exactly counter. A few months will,
 however, restore me to my native
 country, and I will hope, that my
 much loved *Anthony* will then, in
 spite of my unworthiness, afford me
 a cordial welcome. The gentle-
 man, who has kindly undertaken
 the delivery of this too important
 letter to be entrusted to a common
 conveyance, waits whilst I write;
 on which account I must bid you a
 last adieu, untill we meet upon the
 happy English shore. I am in every
 particular (except one) what your
 kindest friendship could desire
 me.

F. Taylor.
 Mr.



Mr. *Bentley* repeatedly ran over the above epistle with equal concern and astonishment, and submitted with the utmost reluctance to the cruel necessity his friend layed him under of waiting his return for an explanation of his strange conduct. It was a work of several days to shake off the mortification and chagrin this letter brought upon him, nor would so short a time have effaced it, had he been in any other company than that of his *Eliza*, who used every obliging method she could devise to banish this cause of discontent from his breast, nor were her kind efforts unsuccessful.

Three months passed rapidly away, the lovers enjoying each other's company without restraint or interruption, when Mr. *Bentley* began to grow solicitous to bring the business of his heart to a conclusion. He was apprehensive, lest some unfortunate accident might intervene, if he too long delayed the accomplishment of his happiness, and therefore earnestly besought his *Eliza* to consent to an early day. She declined it as long as possible; but being closely pressed on all sides, new year's day was at last appointed, to which it then only wanted six weeks.

Mr. *Bentley* would have had his mother's jewels new set as a present for his bride, but had not quite so much confidence in his brother, as

to choose to entrust him with his keys. He, therefore, determined to defer it untill some future day. He, however, wrote to Mr. *Daniel Bentley*, and acquainted him with his intended change of condition, begged the house might be as well prepared as possible, and concluded by inviting him to his nuptials.

Daniel was greatly chagrined at this unexpected news. He cursed his intended sister most heartily, and wished, his brother had had a taste for the pleasures of the chase, as that would have secured him from bringing home a pert minx to subvert all the ancient customs of Bentley-hall. This marriage, was, indeed a stroke he little expected. He had experienced during his brother's absence what he called a full enjoyment of life,

life, which amounted to an exemption from expense, a daily hazarding of his neck in the noble pursuit of a miserable defenseless animal, and closing the evening in a total subversion of reason. *Anthony's* cellars (in the refined language of this sportsman) had bled freely; his horses had been harassed to death, and his servants had hourly trembled at oaths they were utterly unaccustomed to hear.

The honest domesticks sincerely regretted the absence of their good master, and impatiently wished his return. A general satisfaction, therefore, diffused itself through the whole family on the receipt of that letter, which had so different an effect upon their temporary governor, and more especially, as it contained,

tained the agreeable information of the addition of a mistress, who, they doubted not, would soon restore that heart-felt tranquillity they had enjoyed during the life of Mr. and Mrs. Bentley, for there was not one servant at Bentley-hall that had not lived there a dozen or sixteen years. Service there was an establishment, an inheritance to the worthy, nor were they ever discharged, but for some flagrant misdemeanour. They abundantly experienced plenty and ease, though strangers to the luxury of card-money, board-wages, and pecuniary rewards from their master's friends, who were either admitted to his table, or indulged with a few nights lodging.

Bentley-hall was not upon the footing of an inn, nor at the departure

ture of a guest was the court-yard crowded with insolent domesticks, to pick the pockets of that man, who had, in return for his company, received the gratuity of a bed or a dinner.

At length the day arrived that was to give *Eliza Parker* to Mr. *Bentley*. Sir *John Darlington* and his lady were at the ceremony, which was performed by the good parent himself, his Patron taking upon him the disposal of the lady. Never was a wedding-day kept with such propriety, decorum and delicacy. Every species of coarse and unbecoming mirth and ribaldry was banished. This polite, though small party, and the pleasures they enjoyed, were such, as did honour to their

their own delicate tastes, and ought to be exemplary to minds of a different cast.

The day Mr. *Daniel Bentley* was apprised of it, was kept at the hall, but by creatures of a very different stamp, and consequently their celebration of it widely differed from what we have already described.

The whole fraternity of the neighbouring fox-hunters were invited, and an entertainment provided suitable to the keen appetites of that worthy body. There certainly was a very considerable consumption of venison, poultry, wines, &c. insomuch, that none of the good company were either in a capacity or disposition of separating that night.

G

Had

Had Mr. *Hogarth* been admitted to a view of these mid-night-revelers, the Publick might have been presented with a piece by no means inferiour to the greatest of that ingenious artist's productions. Such representations, if rightly considered, would be highly beneficial to society in general, by properly exposing the odiousness of a vice too much in practice, and whilst we only do justice to the skill of the artist, we do injustice to ourselves, and disappoint the end for which genius was given. Our diversions, our taste for paintings or authors might be rendered not only innocent, but profitable, if under proper restrictions. But so long as we admire paintings merely on account of the masterly strokes we find in them,

authors

authors for their wit, and amusements for being only fashionable, we shall continue in danger of rendering obscenity familiar to us by obscene portraitures, of corrupting our morals by profane writers, and of spending our time unworthily by implicitly following the example of a few who consider themselves as exempt by their rank and fortune from observing the rules of propriety, good manners, or even good sense.

The amiable pair spent six weeks with their delighted parents, in which time every thing was prepared for their journey into Hertfordshire. They strongly solicited Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* to accompany them home, but they declined it, and promised to visit them in about

three months. *Eliza* felt, indeed, some filial pangs at this first separation from her indulgent father and mother, but they were surprisingly short of what she expected, and notwithstanding her duty and affection for them was not in the least degree abated, yet she voluntarily complied with that command in holy writ, of quitting father and mother, and of cleaving to her husband.

Mr. *Bentley* had, without the knowledge of his bride, provided a genteel carriage for their conveyance, and on the morning of their departure, instead of the hired chariot they had expected as a thing of course, the family were surprised by the appearance of this new voiture, ornamented with the arms of both
the

the families. Their last adieus were extremely tender, but as they parted, and were left in pairs, their divided grief soon subsided.

Anthony and his *Eliza* felt pleasures they had ever before been strangers to, and though the season was not the most eligible for travelling, they were insensible of every inconvenience. In conversing with each other *they forgot all time*, and, without either impatience or fatigue, in three days reached the seat of the *Bentleys*.

Daniel was drawn forth to the best advantage to receive his new sister, and, to say the truth, acquitted himself in the first compliments with a very tolerable grace. *E'iza*, however, neither conceived disgust, nor any very favourable

impression from his behaviour, notwithstanding it was the best he had ever been known to assume before in all his life.

The next morning, indeed, he rather failed in point of complaisance, by serenading his brother and sister by five o'clock with musick that had no charms in it for them. But his sport was superiour with him to every other consideration; nor would he have practised so much self-denial, as to have refrained from the pursuit of it only that one morning, in compliment to a dutchess. Mr. Bentley was much displeased at this piece of disrespect, and declared, that had he had the least notion of his brother's ill-bred attachment to his hounds, both them

them and their master should have been removed, as a common nuisance, before his return.

This declaration was reported to *Daniel*, who wished from the selfish principle by which all his actions were governed, that he had considered the matter better, and removed his beloved musicians to one of his brother's of the chase for two or three days, and not disturbed his sister so early after her journey, but hoped an apology would make up the matter.

On going in to supper he was somewhat abashed at the rebukeful countenance of his brother, but soon recollecting himself, he said, "I hope, Madam, you do not bear in mind the disturbance I unthinkingly gave you this morning." "Not

in the least, replied Mrs. Bentley with great sweetness; I was a little surprised just at the instant, on account of my being unprepared for it, and wholly unaccustomed to such kind of harmony, but I beg, it may never more be thought of."

On this gentle declaration, *Daniel* cleared up immediately, and began to enter into a detail of the excellent sport he had had that morning. He now started the hare a second time, and followed her through all her doublings with wonderful skill and dexterity. At length the artful puss, continued he, threw him out for a considerable time, from which dilemma he was happily relieved by jowler, regained the scent, and he then ran her down most gloriously with the whole pack in full cry.

When

When he came to her death, a savage ardour sparkled in his eyes, and the cries of the poor tortured animal but furnished him with witticisms.

The tender-hearted *Eliza* was shocked to a very great degree at the inhumanity which displayed itself in every circumstance of this description. She was at first silent, but as he still continued his encomiums on the chase; "Can the worrying of a poor animal, said she, out of its existence deserve the commendations you bestow on it? Excuse me, Sir, if I take the liberty of saying, that there is rather barbarity in it. The exercise may, indeed, conduce to the bodily health, but the mind, I am afraid, is often

hardened by it to a degree that renders it much less sensible of the feelings of humanity."

Daniel stared at this new system of philosophy, as it really appeared to him, having never heard any thing of the like among those whom he used to converse with. With mortified countenance, therefore, he observed that different people entertained different opinions, but that in some places it was not unusual for ladies themselves, to follow a pack of hounds the whole day, and receive as much delight from it as any gentleman of them all.

"I am sorry, returned Mrs. *Bentley*, that there are women so abandoned to all sense of propriety and decorum, as to be capable of sharing

sharing in such (to give them no worse a name) masculine diversions. How inconsistent is it with the female character, to be so devoid of that softness and timidity, by which alone a delicate mind is distinguished ! My education, continued she, has furnished me with such different notions, that I could as soon be a spectator at the publick execution of a criminal, as at the lengthened torments of a less offensive being."

Daniel's amazement was now increased beyond measure at the conclusion of his sister's speech. For it seems, he had, ever since his brother communicated his intention of changing his condition, cast about for a help-mate for himself ; in this view had fixed his eye upon a raw,

ill-bred creature, sister to the most boisterous of his bottle-companions, whose only recommendation was a fortune of five thousand pounds, and her greatest charms, even in his own opinion, next to her money, her knowledge of the world. For she had spent three months in London, about two years before he became acquainted with her, and had made so good use of her time, as to have been present at three executions, the pilboring of five men, one of whom expired before he could be taken down, the severe whipping of two women, and fires in a great abundance. To her very feeling description of these extraordinary sights the enamoured *Daniel* would frequently pay the most satisfactory attention.

He

He conceived a very mean opinion, therefore, of his sister's understanding, from the sentiments she had just declared, and secretly wondered at his brother's choice of so weak a woman for his wife; for as Mr. Bentley had long forbore, from a knowledge of his brother's incorrigible disposition, attempting to dissuade him from the pursuit of his darling pleasure, it never once entered Daniel's imagination, that Eliza had spoke her husband's thoughts therein as well as her own.

He took his leave, however, very soon after supper, not being in the least pleased with the disposition of his new relation, and repaired directly to his own chamber. There, while one of Mr. Bentley's servants (the greatest of his favourites) assisted

fisted him in undressing, he thus harangued him. "Why, *Richard*, said he, I have very bad news for you; this lady, my brother has married, will certainly turn every thing in the family quite topsy-turvy. She has already been preaching some of her father's musty, old sermons to me, but I can assure you, I have not much benefitted by them; for she might as easily persuade me to take a voyage to the Indies, as adopt her new tangled notions. Why, she says, *Richard*, that killing a hare or a fox is unmanly and cruel, and, I suppose, considers me, for endeavouring to entertain her with a description of my days sport, as no better than a Turk or a barbarian. I am very glad, I never suffered myself to be brought

brought

brought up by rule, and to receive old *Parker's* instructions, as my father would have had me, for, perhaps, I might then have been as queer as his fine daughter. You see, *Richard*, a woman, though she does not bring a penny with her, can give herself as many airs, as if she had five thousand pounds. I am sure, I never heard Miss *Bowling* (the name of his own admired lady) take upon her to find fault with a whole country, as my brother's wife has done this very night."

Richard made no reply to this elegant flourish, but being told, there was no farther occasion for his assistance, made a respectable bow, and withdrew.

To say the truth, this honest fellow

low never had much affection for the young gentleman, but as the son of his ever honoured and deceased master. He always showed him much respect, which *Daniel* mistook for attachment. *Richard*, therefore, returned to his fellow-servants, but not open-mouthed to repeat what Mr. *Daniel* had said to him, according to the common practice of these underlings in a family. But if he did not speak of it, he thought, perhaps, the more, and his honest soul was far from entertaining a better opinion of the fox-hunter from the sarcasms he had heard him throw out so early against his sister.

In the mean time *Anthony* and his *Eliza* were not much concerned at their brother's depriving them so soon

soon of his good company. Mr. Bentley expressed his approbation of his wife's sentiments, and added, "It is, indeed, to be lamented, that my brother has such an unhappy turn that way, but it seems innate in him, and consequently is unconquerable. For my own part, continued he, I have quite given him up, but from the consideration, that we are both the sons of one father, I am unwilling to come to an open rupture with him, and he has taken some pains lately, to persuade me, that he is not wholly void of affection towards me. But I now leave you to judge, my dear Eliza, what cause I had to dread a separation from you and your worthy family, as in my brother, you must

must perceive, there is no society that can be agreeable to me."

Eliza's veracity would not permit her to speak favourably of such a strange being; therefore she tacitly assented to her husband's sentiments, and heartily, but secretly wished, he might not long continue under their roof.

Daniel also on his side came to a resolution before the morning, to attack *Miss Bowling* with redoubled vigour, and bring the match to a speedy conclusion, in hopes, that her brother would make him an offer of his house on that contingency, and enlarge his kennels for the accommodation of his beloved pack. For he began now to think he could but ill brook the rebukes of *Eliza Parker*, as he always called
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ed her in despite. However, as it was his peculiar maxim to look further than the present hour, he determined both to continue and part with them upon good terms, as there was no answering, he would often say, for the doublings of life, and if the fox was not to be met at one corner, she might at another.

These points settled, he arose the next morning with the sun, and bid *Richard* tell his master, he should not be at home all that day.

Mrs. *Bentley* was now become the topick of the village, and every one, from the known good character of the father, was delighted with the thoughts of Mr. *Parker's* daughter being mistress of *Bentley-hall*.

Mr.

Mr. *Price*, the young clergyman, to whom Mr. *Parker* had resigned his vicarage, had married an agreeable person of very good sense, and a tolerable genteel education, to which was added a fortune of five hundred pounds. As soon as he was assured of Mr. and Mrs. *Bentley's* arrival, he rode over to pay his respects to them, and begged leave to introduce his wife to Mrs. *Bentley's* acquaintance. He enquired with the utmost solicitude concerning the health of his patron, (as he always stiled Mr. *Parker*) and his good wife, to which *Eliza* returned the most obliging answers. The young clergyman still continuing the subject, expressed his gratitude for her father, saying, that he had received

ceived more from his goodness, than he ever did from his own father.

It seems, the latter, from an ill-judged ambition to make his son a gentleman, had bred him to the church, without either interest or fortune to obtain the smallest preferment for him, and then turned him adrift at his quitting the university, telling him, that as he had bestowed a gentleman's education upon him, it was now his own fault, if he did not procure a suitable maintenance, for there was not such good pickings in any profession, as that he had brought him up to. In consequence of this, at the very time he made an application to Mr. *Parker*, to retain him as his curate, he had no other prospect than starving like a gentleman,
or

or submitting to some very ungentle means to procure him a subsistence, being reduced to the very last half guinea he had upon the earth, when that good divine so generously rescued him from misery, and placed him in a situation he would, probably, never otherwise have attained.

Mr. *Bentley* was highly pleased with the gratitude and ingenuousness of this young gentleman, and gave him and his wife a most cordial invitation to visit them frequently, as they had but few agreeable neighbours.

Mrs. *Bentley* too enjoyed the thoughts of an agreeable friend, as she doubted not but she should find Mrs. *Price* from her husband's behaviour.

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The next day brought them to the hall, Mr. *Price* saying, they could not in his opinion give too early proofs of their respects. Mrs. *Price* was really a very well behaved woman. She was delighted to a very great degree with Mrs. *Bentley*, nor was *Eliza* much less taken with her.

She had passed her life in the country, and thus had not, perhaps, all that refinement about her, which is alone to be acquired in the great metropolis; but her sentiments were natural, and truly correspondent with good sense, though utterly foreign to those imbibed by what is called a knowledge of the world. She was, in short, a good oeconomist, an affectionate wife, and a sincere friend.

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This little company spent the day very agreeably, and reluctantly observed the approach of evening, as it obliged them to separate from the most agreeable society they had ever met with.

Daniel on his side spent the day with his mistress and her brother, whom he entertained with a description of *Mr. Bentley's* choice, and had the happiness to out-do his usual out-doings in the eyes of the former, who often, during his satirical relation, made use of the pretty ejaculations of pert creature, upstart, confident huffy &c. &c. It is not at all to be wondered at, that *Miss Bowling* was incapable of admiring a character, which was an exact contrast to her own, and she

she prudently resolved, therefore, not to visit at Bentley-hall, because, as she said, it would be impossible for her to conceal her contempt of the little mortal, who was so elated, because just raised to some small degree of consequence.

Daniel secretly congratulated himself upon this successful exertion of his fine talent for mimicry, which with any other minds, perhaps, upon the earth, would not have met with so favourable a reception. Dinner, however, being over, and the glass cheerfully going round, an elevation of spirits soon succeeded, and he solicited Mr. *Bowling* with uncommon ardour, to use his interest with his sister, to obtain her consent for a speedy completion of his wishes. He found

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himself, indeed, master of so much elocution at this juncture, that he considered Miss *Bowling's* being gone out to make a visit as an opportunity not to be passed by, and therefore said all that he could think of on the occasion, concluding by observing to the brother, that he should never be able to run her down without his assistance.

Miss *Bowling* was naturally a lady of a very communicative disposition, and with the greatest part of her acquaintance, that good natured faculty was her only recommendation.

The human heart from its innate corruptness delights in detraction, calumny, and every species of humiliation, except that of itself; hence an unfavourable representation

tion of a good action, a mangled reputation, and a handsome person, or fine understanding, ridiculously set forth by the little malice of the envious, is so grateful, that it often secures a good reception for the wretch, who burlesques them, though both despised and condemned on every other, and even on that very account. The persons also, who affect to disapprove this disposition, at the same time, that they condemn it with their lips, betray, for the most part, the highest approbation of it in their conduct, by repeating, with undiminished acrimony, the malicious report they pretend to discredit and discountenance.

To a family of this stamp was Miss *Bowling* gone to make a visit.

It is true, she was not under any previous engagement, but was well assured, her company would be far from unacceptable, as she brought them pleasing intelligence concerning their new neighbour. She was blessed with a happy imagination, and, when ridicule or defamation was the topick, was mistress of a very tolerable flow of expression; and so well did she acquit herself upon this occasion, that she proved to a demonstration, that *Mrs. Bentley* was but one remove from a driveller, and that was distinguishable only by her pertness and vanity. After having poured forth all that *Daniel* had related, with innumerable additions and improvements, she affirmed, that she had only mentioned facts, as she
had

had them from a very near relation of the family, who appeared much concerned at Mr. *Bentley's* injudicious choice.

The ladies, who composed this pretty assembly, expressed great amazement at the information, but said, that this came of young gentlemen rambling from home, to seek wives, though, surely, said they, there were ladies enough in the neighbourhood, who might have been honoured with Mr. *Bentley's* alliance; but they were to be overlooked, it seems, and a person brought amongst them from nobody could tell where. However, as they had a great regard for the father and mother of the young gentleman, they should never repeat what Miss *Bowling* had so obligingly communicated,

nicated, but save him, as much as possible, from becoming the laugh of the country.

In this charitable resolution, the reader may imagine, they did not long persist, for the curate's wife stepping in for a little chat, and Miss *Bowling* at the same time taking her leave, they were not able to contain themselves for a moment, but immediately retailed every particular, without the least loss or diminution. They concluded, nevertheless, with saying, that, perhaps, every tittle they had mentioned might be false, as they knew the malevolence of their author's disposition too well, to pay her an implicit credit, and sincerely wished, for the young gentleman's sake, that they might find the lady quite
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the reverse of the representation that had been made to them of her.

Mrs. *Brightley*, the wife of the curate of the parish, was a woman, who had not a mind quite so well turned for ill-natured pleasure, as might have been wished, besides that both herself and her husband had received many favours from Mr. *Bentley*, and had farther views of the same nature. Add to which, her husband had unluckily that very day been paying his compliments to the bride and bridegroom, and at his return had been almost extravagant in his praise of the former. He had likewise learnt, that she was daughter to the Reverend Mr. *Parker*, the memory of whose merit six years had not been capable of obliterating.

Mrs. *Brightley* did not, however, attempt to interrupt her rich neighbour in her curious tale, but finding she had concluded it, “ I am really surprised, ladies, said she, addressing the whole group, that there is in the world a person of so much ill-nature and invention, as to be capable of trumping up such a malicious and groundless report. My husband is but just returned from making the wedding-visit, and assures me, he never either saw or conversed with so agreeable a woman, as the bride. Why, Madam, added she, addressing Mrs. *Elliot*, the lady of the house, she is the daughter of Mr. *Parker*, Mr. *Bentley*’s tutor, who was known to take the utmost pains imaginable in her education, and before she was
four-

fourteen she gave evident proofs of a fine understanding."

"Mrs. *Bentley* the daughter of Mr. *Parker*?" interrogated Mrs. *Elliot*; but without giving Mrs. *Brightley* time to reply, she resumed, "I am really astonished at Miss *Bowling*'s behaviour, and shall be very glad to visit the lady both on her father's account, as well as the family's she is now entered into."

Thus did the propagation of this good story receive a total overthrow almost at its first setting out; for ill-nature, like scandal, if disarmed of its sting by a bad reception, soon dies away.

Daniel made so quick a progress in Miss *Bowling*'s affections, that in the ensuing six weeks, from the visit above-mentioned, (the writings

being completed, and her whole fortune settled upon her) she vouchsafed to honour him with her hand. The voice of fame was the first intelligence received at Bentley-hall of this addition to their family, *Daniel* having, in the hurry of this grand affair, lost sight of that resolution he had made of preserving, at least in appearance, a good understanding between his brother and him. Mr. and Mrs. *Bentley*, however, were neither surprised nor mortified at the proceedings of a relation they could not esteem.

About a week after the completion of this happy event, *Daniel* became visible, and calling on his brother, without making any apology for his former neglect, gave him and Mrs. *Bentley* an invitation to

to his brother-in-law's house, for his scheme had perfectly succeeded of taking up his quarters there.

Anthony and his *Eliza* took not the least notice of the little respect he had shewn them, in not acquainting them sooner with his intentions, but promised to make the lady a visit the very first opportunity. *Daniel* communicated this intelligence to his bride, who considered her submitting to receive such a poor creature, as she was determined to think Mrs. *Bentley*, (in opposition to the opinion of the whole country) as an extraordinary piece of condescension. On the third day, subsequent to Mr. *Daniel's* genteel invitation, the amiable *Eliza* prepared to make this wedding-visit, to which she found her

inclination but little affected. She, without any design, dressed herself that day exceedingly becoming, and, attended by her beloved *Anthony*, set forth for the house of Mr. *Bowling*.

The bride sustained an infinite share of fatigue, in order to make such an appearance in the eyes of the insignificant, (as she haughtily called her new sister) as should give that impression of her consequence, she thought herself entitled to. Had she been acquainted in the smallest degree with the disposition of *Eliza*, she might have spared herself all her trouble, as her expected visitant was incapable of being taken either by the eye or the ear, except where the charm of good sense was apparent, and a behaviour visibly dictated by an humane and generous heart.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Daniel Bentley* sickened with envy at the sight of her sister's chariot, and observed, that that alone was sufficient to turn the head of a little country - parson's daughter. *Eliza* on being introduced made this haughty lady an extreme pretty compliment, with that agreeable ease, that ever accompanies the expressions of the well-bred. The woman of fortune not having a prompt reply, returned no other answer than a curtesy, and in order to conceal her deficiency, begged the lady to be seated. *Eliza*, during this whole visit, was so engaging, and unassuming, that the little prejudices of her new relation vanished insensibly, and she expressed a desire of being admitted to her friendship and acquaintance, upon the familiar footing of a member of the same family. Mrs.

Mrs. *Bentley* said as many obliging things, as she possibly could, without making too great a sacrifice of her veracity, and concluded with saying, that she would endeavour to render Bentley-hall agreeable to her.

The brother returned from the field of slaughter, just as Mr. *Bentley* was conducting his lady to her carriage, and came in for one smack (as Mr. *Bowling* phrased it) at a fine woman.

The happy pair found at their return home a letter from their good parents, containing the agreeable information of their intending very soon to spend some time with them. Their joy was mutual upon this as well as every other occasion; for they so entirely concurred in their desires

desires and inclinations, that they seemed, as it were, informed only by one soul.

Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* at length performed their promise, and revisited a country, where the excellency of their lives and disposition had procured them as many friends, as they had acquaintance.

The days of the happy pair were now one uninterrupted scene of happiness for some time, but fortune had only smiled to make her frowns more terrible. Four years elapsed, before they experienced the tender and pleasing sensations of parental love, a felicity, they began to despair of ever enjoying. But Providence had otherwise decreed, and at the expiration of that period the fair *Eliza* became pregnant; the first
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certainty of which awakened all the parent in their hearts. Mr. *Bentley's* delight at the engaging name of father was checked and allayed by the apprehensions of the fond husband. The bare possibility of his exchanging for a dear infant his much dearer wife shook his very soul, and this painful reflection still continually obtruding itself, as the time advanced that must determine the event, his anxieties were not a little augmented by it. *Eliza* perceived it, but, far from guessing the cause, tenderly urged him to let her participate, that she might endeavour to soften his cares. “My dear, said this amiable woman, exclude me not from the knowledge of whatsoever it be that disturbs your repose,

repose, out of any mistaken apprehension, that my mind is weaken'd by my present condition. I have not so little profited by my good father's pious instructions, as to feel too heavily the hand of disappointment. Am I not still blessed with you, my support and consolation, your health unimpaired, and in appearance happily exempt from all the infirmities of human nature, and can you then imagine, that I shall complain or murmur at a slight calamity? Do let me receive this proof of your wonted affection and confidence, for be assured, that, by communicating it, you will lessen instead of increasing the concern of your *Eliza*.

Mr. *Bentley*, fearful of alarming
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her with the sense of her danger, endeavoured, though in vain, to persuade her, that she was mistaken in her conjectures. But she still insisted upon it, that she was well convinced he was deceiving her, and that the thought there of more severely affected her, than any thing he could mention.

“ My cares, my life, said Mr. Bentley, since you will be made acquainted with them, are merely upon your account ; for notwithstanding every period of life is equally precarious with your present condition, yet the bare apprehensions of the hazard, to which you are now so exposed, are too great for me to sustain.”

“ How kind, yet blameable, replied *Eliza*, is your concern for me !

me! But, surely, my dear, you should remember, how wonderfully Providence distinguished itself in raising you from the very verge of the grave, contrary to the expectations of every one who then saw you. That all-preserving and all-restoring hand of heaven is not shortened, and on that I rely; but should the number of my days be accomplished, and I be taken away from the evil to come, O reflect, that a still greater calamity might have befallen us; that mortality is ever incident to a separation, and that, if we survived each others affections, we might in vain wish for such a relief. Think, how heavily under such afflicting circumstances

circumstances one or other of us should drag out a miserable existence, unauthorized as we frail dependants are to defy the author of our being, by the uplifted hand of suicide. For how shall a creature, formed out of the very dust, to whom the common blessings of light and reason are infinitely beyond its utmost merit, presume to dictate to the voice that spoke it, what it is? Thus and thus let my condition be. Subdue then, my dear *Anthony*, these terrors so unbecoming a breast enlightened by a single ray of that religion we profess. Endeavour to acquire an implicit resignation to that power which bestowed, and consequently has a right to recall, if improperly used, every blessing you are now in possession of. Be-
ware

ware of that too frequent practice of idolatry, nor imagine, whilst you cherish in your heart a superior affection to that of your great creatour, that you are innocent of a breach of the commandment, which so positively says, *Thou shalt not have any other God than me.*"

Anthony assumed a smiling aspect at her discourse, purely to conceal the anguish he endured. "I will, said he, my love, frequently reflect upon what you recommend to my consideration. I both feel and acknowledge the justice and propriety of it, and I hope, I shall not again incur a second chiding, by suffering human frailty to usurp a dominion over human reason; but, added he with a vivacity, in which his heart had but little share, neither

Seneca,

Seneca, nor the surly *Diogenes* could in such a case have reasoned half so well."

Daniel and his wife dropped in at this juncture to make them an occasional visit, the families still continuing upon a footing, which was scarce to be expected from their different dispositions. Mr. *Bowling's* sister had proved very prolifick, and in four years produced as many children, of whom *Eliza* took very affectionate notice, and as there was no great prospect of an heir from the other quarter, all was harmony and happiness. *Daniel's* three first children were girls, but the fourth proving a boy, he was called *Anthony*, and considered by his father and mother, not only as the presumptive,

tive, but actual heir to the family-estate.

They were not a little chagrined, therefore, at the first report of Mrs. *Bentley's* condition; but as the intervention of one life was liable to many fortunate contingences, and they could not with any shew of decency change their behaviour, they continued from policy that very good humour, which had been the result of their hatred and avaricious expectations.

Daniel brought his eldest girl along with him on this visit. She had been named *Arabella*, by her proud mother, in honour of herself, and, notwithstanding her early time of life, had betrayed such a complication in her nature of both father and mother, as promised to render

render her a most complete character.

She was absolute master and mistress at home, had several little unfortunate animals in her possession, which she tortured at her pleasure; fear, tenderness, and affection not having the least share in her composition. Her person was really engaging, justness of proportion, clearness of complexion, and regularity of features being possessed by her in an eminent degree, a fair covering of foul deformity.

She was accustomed to follow her father in the visitation of his hounds and horses, without either fear or dismay, and taught to examine the wounds of the various game, sent home weltering in gore, with all the transports of savage delight.

Thus

Thus was her infant mind inured to more than Amazonian fierceness, and every softer particle of her soul hardened into downright brutality.

Eliza beheld with horror and compassion the growing inclinations of her niece, and would have saved her from, and, if possible, eradicated the pernicious seeds springing in her young breast, if it had been practicable.

But these mistaken parents could not live an hour without their *Arabella*, nor could *Arabella* be satisfied one moment without them, as she was become impatient of that controul, which the impropriety and boisterousness of her behaviour was ever rendering necessary.

The time now grew towards a period, which was to bless or for

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ever blast poor Mr. *Bentley's* hopes.

Mrs. *Parker* came to assist her child at this juncture, and laboured under no less anxiety than that by which the fond husband's heart was torn.

But how vain, how unnecessary appeared their fears, for the gentle *Eliza* became mother to a daughter without any other than the common danger, attendant on such an extremity. How grateful this news to the heart of Mr. *Bentley*, who, contrary to the generality of country esquires, set as much value upon his little daughter, as the tenderest parent could possibly do.

The season being favourable, Mrs. *Bentley* was able to appear abroad much sooner than the natural

tural delicacy of her constitution seemed to promise, and took upon herself, in conjunction with her good mother, that important charge, so lightly and commonly assumed by strangers, without their ever reflecting, that they have bound themselves, as far as human nature will admit, to qualify the little infant to become an inheritor of a future existence.

Eliza insisted upon her mother's giving the object of their united affections her own name, and accordingly that of *Louisa* was bestowed upon her.

The first year of this new stranger's life was passed over with every promising symptom of health and goodness of constitution.

Then infant reason grew apace,

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and the enraptured parents hung over her delighted, her lisping dialect and untaught endearments having rendered her beyond expression pleasing. In this enjoyment did they spend three years, when all their happy prospects were at once obscured by the heavy cloud of affliction.

Mrs. *Bentley* had ever since the birth of her daughter been in an almost imperceptible decline. She had felt some inward decay, but forbore complaining, from a too tender consideration for her husband's repose, untill it was advanced beyond the power of medicine to remedy.

She continued lovely to her last moment, which happened just six weeks, from the time she first mentioned,

tioned, or rather that her countenance betrayed her disorder.

Her afflicted Mother was conveyed home immediately upon her breathing her last, and for two whole years never quitted her own apartment.

Mr. *Parker* bore her loss with surprising resignation; but the poor husband's sorrow was too poignant to admit of alleviation. His affliction was of the heart, silent, permanent and unconquerable, nor could the utmost persuasions of his friends prevail upon him to quit Bentley-hall, or exchange his wonted apartment for any other in the house.

The innocent *Louisa* was frightened at a revolution she could not account for. Her Mamma was car-

ried away, never more, as the servants told her, to return again, and her Papa was become incapable of being diverted by all her little efforts.

This disconsolate gentleman would often take the tender innocent in his arms, and pressing her to his breast, "My dear lamb, he would say, thou hast lost the best of mothers, and alas ! I feel, it will not be long before thou art destitute of a father too ; yea, it is impossible I should long survive. That amiable woman has robbed me of all power of enjoyment, and it is in the grave alone that I can find rest."

The struggle for four months was very strong between grief and nature, but at length the latter was sub-

subdued, and the worthy man, notwithstanding what might have been expected of patience and submission from his religious course of life, became an easy prey to the general destroyer of the human species, and by this one indissoluble attachment incontestably evinced, that even the best of mortals are wide of perfection.

On his first confinement to his bed, he sent for his brother, who had really behaved very well towards him for some time, and addressed him in the following manner.

“ You see, my dear *Daniel*, the
 “ state to which I am reduced by
 “ that severe stroke which has separated me from my beloved *Eli-*
 “ *za*, to whom I am now hasten-
 “ ing.

“ ing. I have long foreseen my
 “ fate, and have made the best a-
 “ tonement in my power to my poor
 “ child for her second misfortune,
 “ in appointing you, who are my
 “ next of kin, joint-guardian with
 “ her grand-father. As I am un-
 “ willing to bring too great a
 “ weight upon his gray hairs, I
 “ must entreat you, to act in the par-
 “ ticulars of my funeral, and con-
 “ vey my *Louisa* as soon as possible
 “ to her other parents. You will
 “ find, I have left you no incon-
 “ siderable legacy, and hope, you
 “ will, in a great measure, supply
 “ to my tender infant what I ought
 “ to have been.”

Daniel was a little affected, but
 soon got the better of it. He took
 Mr. *Bentley's* hand, and with the
 utmost

utmost show of sincerity assured his dear brother, he would discharge the trust reposed in him with the sincerest integrity and assiduity. "Your child, said he, shall be considered by me as my own, and may God so deal with me and mine, as I shall acquit myself with respect to her." The dieing man expressed the utmost satisfaction at these assurances, and begged, that his *Louisa* might be brought to him, that he might take his final leave of her. The little prattler, amazed at these transactions, asked a thousand innocent questions, without having them taken notice of. Her uncle took her up in his arms, and held her, whilst she received the last benedictions of her dieing father, who in

a few hours afterwards dropped off like a blasted rose, which retains its sweetness, though its bloom be destroyed.

Mr. and Mrs. *Parker* were soon informed of this additional calamity to the loss they had lately felt, and as the latter was not in a condition to undertake the care of the dear little orphan, the good divine desired, she might continue some short time with her uncle and aunt, 'till his wife should be a little recovered, and himself able to fetch her.

Mr. *Parker* was a stranger to *Daniel's* avarice and vileness of soul; therefore desired, he would act in every respect, as might best conduce to the advantage of his niece, and be most conformable to the directions of the deceased.

This.

This was the very thing *Daniel* wished for, but could not even flatter himself with obtaining. Being left, however, to act as he thought proper, he consulted nothing but his own avarice. The funeral expenses were by no means adequate to Mr. *Bentley's* appointment, nor were some charitable donations distributed according to his request. In short, he made a property and advantage of every person and thing he could, and the little *Louisa* was put under Mrs. *Bentley's* tender protection and management, where we shall at present leave her, and conclude the first Volume.

End of the First Volume.

This was a very large family
 and it was not until the
 father had died that the
 mother, to say the least,
 prospered, the comfort and
 the convenience of the
 family were in no way
 to be compared with
 the father's condition of
 affairs according to his
 situation. In fact, he had a
 advantage of every person and thing
 he could, and the little family was
 put under Mrs. B's management
 and management, which
 was the best of business for her, and
 concludes the first volume.

End of the First Volume.

